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A Test of the "News Diversity" Standard: Single Frames, Multiple Frames, and Values Regarding the Ukraine Conflict

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Abstract
The present study adds to the framing literature by providing a test of Mauro Porto's "News Diversity" standard for professional journalism: providing multiple, equally persuasive frames in every news story. What are the effects of multiple versus single media frames on a foreign policy issue, and how do they interact with people's foreign policy values? Previous studies have looked at how single frames influence opinions, how frames interact with values, and a few studies have investigated the effects of two competing frames at varying levels of persuasiveness. None, however, have used four, equally strong frames on a foreign policy issue and measured their effects among those with differing foreign policy values. We found that exposure to only single frames tended to move participants away from their stated values and in the direction of the frame, while exposure to multiple, competing frames kept participants' opinions closer to their stated values—without merely reinforcing previously held opinions.

Keywords
Eastern Europe, foreign news, journalistic norms, media framing, media effects, political attitudes

Late in 2013, a crisis was brewing in Ukraine. Then-president Viktor Yanukovych had pulled back from plans for further integration with the EU and strengthened ties with Russia instead. This set off a furious reaction from many Ukrainians,

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particularly those in the west of the country—and, with support from the United States and EU, they succeeded in overthrowing Yanukovych in early 2014. Russophone Ukrainians in the south and east of the country then threatened a revolt, and voters in Crimea chose to leave Ukraine and be annexed by Russia amid reports of an influx of Russian soldiers into the peninsula—and so began what is arguably the most serious confrontation between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War. In the United States, different media outlets presented the crisis in differing ways: from the history of the conflict, to the motivations of the adversaries, and from the reasons why Americans should be concerned, to the strategy the U.S. government should follow in resolving it. Particularly for those Americans who obtain their news from online sources, a wide variety of (conflicting) narratives were available to explain the conflict in Ukraine. As a result of these various narratives, the Ukraine case was ideal for our study.

The news media does not simply transmit factual information about current events, instead, it is packaged into "frames," or narratives that *explain* and *contextualize* such information. Frames have been defined as "what unifies information into a package that can influence audiences" (Tewksbury and Scheufele 2009: 19). Alternately, frames can be seen as "an invitation or an incentive to read a news story in a particular way"—and "[b]ecause these frames often are unnoticed and implicit, their impact is by stealth" (Van Gorp 2007: 63). Framing effects—the influence frames exert on opinions—have been found to operate across a wide array of countries, issue areas, and media sources (de Vreese et al. 2011; Jonsson and Buhr 2011; Linos and Twist 2013; Nelson et al. 1997; Sotirovic 2000). Frames can be influential due to the different *information* they present, or by the way in which that information is presented—or both (Simon and Jerit 2007; Vraga et al. 2010). Furthermore, framing has the potential to manipulate public opinion by omission (failing to provide interpretations that citizens would find relevant). It is through omission that media framing sets the ideological boundaries for public discourse on political issues (Entman 2007). Omission is conducted through the process of "indexing," which presents only those frames of issues that match the views of political elites—leaving opinions that do not enjoy elite support at a considerable disadvantage (Bennett 1990). Climate change provides a useful illustration of some of these framing effects in a real-world political context. A study of shifts in public opinion on climate change from 2003 to 2010 found that the biggest influences were elite cues and media coverage, not extreme weather or scientific advances in understanding the issue (Brulle et al. 2012). A massive, polarizing shift in public opinion ostensibly occurred as a result of media influence, whether by transmitting elite cues, explaining scientific studies, or focusing attention elsewhere. Nevertheless, elite cues can directly and positively affect the democratic process. As Donald Kinder (2003: 359–60) points out,

> When elites provide useful frames, citizens may be more likely to see a connection between what they care about and what politics offers . . . citizens are more likely to express opinions, and such opinions are often more stable over time and better anchored in the political considerations that the frames appear to highlight.

Foreign policy matters are no exception, as opinions on foreign policy that lack support among political elites do not tend to receive much media attention, keeping the public ignorant and policy options off the table (Powlick and Katz 1998). Concerns like these bring to mind Robert Dahl's (1959: 29) pessimistic conjecture that if "political preferences are simply plugged into the system by leaders (business or other) in order to extract what they want from the system, then the model of plebiscitary democracy is substantially equivalent to the model of totalitarian rule." Noting that normative democratic theory is only beginning to grapple with the amply demonstrated power of the media to influence citizens' opinions, Chong and Druckman (2013: 15) argue that the "endogeneity of public preferences calls into question the basic responsiveness model of democracy and forces us to reconsider the conditions in which the public can exercise autonomy and provide meaningful input in the democratic process."

Motivated by such concerns, Mauro Porto (2007a) has argued for a "News Diversity" standard for journalism. Based on the interpretive citizen model, Porto defines "diversity" in the news media as a news environment containing a plurality of competing "interpretive frames," with the news media—as opposed to political parties and candidates—acting as the primary force in "shaping the menu of choices" (Porto 2007a: 311–12). "Interpretive frames" is the key element to the News Diversity standard. These frames have "specific 'sponsors,' the various social actors that promote specific interpretations of political reality, including politicians, organizations, and social movements" (Porto 2007a: 312). According to the News Diversity standard, major media outlets should present a broad variety of frames for all political issues, looking beyond the frames preferred by political elites to those presented by civil society groups and social movements. Furthermore, this diversity of frames should be present in every news story: even (or especially) when political elites are in agreement, the media should seek out dissident views and present them fairly alongside the dominant perspective(s). This would help ensure that debate in the modern, mediatized public sphere is not monopolized by powerful elites, and that underprivileged groups and marginalized views at least get to be heard and considered by the public.

However, the argument for a News Diversity standard hinges on whether exposure to multiple, equally strong frames actually results in the formation of less unduly influenced or polarized opinions. There would be no point in adopting such a journalistic standard if news consumers exhibit motivated reasoning by ignoring or discounting frames they dislike and by strengthening their opinions under the influence of the frames they do like. Studies of ideological polarization suggest the possibility that exposure to multiple frames may only increase levels of skepticism and spur news consumers to argue against frames they dislike (Taber and Lodge 2006), especially for those with higher levels of political knowledge (Taber et al. 2009). If this conjecture is correct, exposure to multiple frames may not result in a more informed public debate, but rather in greater polarization of opinions as motivated reasoning pushes all sides of a political debate to accept consonant and reject inconsonant frames. However, motivated reasoning faces significant constraints, including knowledge that contradicts a desired conclusion (Kunda 1990). That is, awareness of facts that would contradict a desired conclusion impedes the process of motivated reasoning to arrive at that conclusion.

Unfortunately, most framing studies have largely ignored how multiple, conflicting frames influence opinion: Only 3.2 percent of the 347 studies in Borah's (2011) review of the framing literature analyzed effects of competing frames. Even fewer have analyzed more than two, equally persuasive frames; we were unable to find any study providing participants with three or more equally persuasive but conflicting frames covering the same issue. The present study seeks to fill this gap by comparing the effects on opinion of four, equally persuasive frames versus single frames on a foreign policy issue.

Results from research on *dual* frames have shown that they tend to mute one-sided framing effects (Chong and Druckman 2007). While competing frames appear to cancel themselves out on average (Aklin and Urpelainen 2013; Wise and Brewer 2010), they provoke more consideration about the issue (Brewer and Gross 2005), and they can spur even the unmotivated to deliberate on an issue (Druckman 2011). Competing frames of an issue allow citizens to develop opinions on issues more in line with their values (Hansen 2007; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). A widely available, diverse array of frames can have direct effects on elections. For instance, during the 2002 Brazilian presidential election, legally mandated free television time afforded to the candidates provided new frames of the issues that conflicted with the dominant frames in the media—swaying the election in favor of a candidate disliked by the economic elite (Porto 2007b). New media may provide a greater diversity of frames (Im et al. 2011), suggesting that those who get their news primarily from the Internet may be less susceptible to one-sided framing effects simply by being exposed to a greater diversity of frames. Therefore, we expected that single frames would move participants' Ukraine policy opinions toward the frame and away from their foreign policy values (Hypothesis 1 [H1]), and consistent with Porto (2007a), we expected that exposure to multiple frames would keep Ukraine policy opinions closer to participants' foreign policy values, without polarization (Hypothesis 2 [H2]).

Foreign Policy, Values, and the Ukraine Conflict

Framing is quite effective concerning unfamiliar issues or events, or when it links familiar issues with existing beliefs, attitudes, and values (Tewksbury and Scheufele 2009). Values have been found to influence the effects of frames, with frames emphasizing considerations central to one's values being more persuasive (Nelson and Garst 2005), particularly among the more educated (Barker 2005). Frames can also be designed strategically to take advantage of competing sets of values (Nelson et al. 2011) or to activate certain values in the processing of a news story (Shah et al. 1996). Influential frames often tap into deep-seated cultural narratives, nudging us to interpret an event or issue in accordance with widely held beliefs, like "my country always seeks to do good around the world" (Lakoff 2011). Also, our preexisting knowledge about an issue—organized into schemas—moderates the effects of framing (Shen 2004). If we have well-developed, elaborate schemas on an issue, we are less likely to be influenced by a media frame that contradicts them (Shen and Edwards 2005). Frames may be most persuasive for those at medium levels of knowledge about an issue; those with little knowledge may be unable to incorporate the frame's message into their meager issue-related schemas, and those with high levels of knowledge tend to be unlikely to modify their dense, highly structured schemas on the issue (Baden and Lecheler 2012; Zaller 1992). However, framing studies are contradictory on this point (Borah 2011), and the interaction between frames and knowledge likely varies across issue areas. We expected those with more strongly held foreign policy values and more knowledge about Ukraine to be less influenced by frames (Hypothesis 3 [H3]).

Values have been defined as ideas about what is desirable and how to achieve desirable outcomes; however, values are not all-powerful, and other factors in our "cultural tool-kits" influence our opinions and how we attempt to accomplish desirable goals (Hitlin and Pinkston 2013; Wuthnow 2008). *Political* values seem to emanate from *personal* values; for instance, personal values for security, conformity, and tradition correlate with political values for law and order, blind patriotism, and traditional morality (Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014). Political values concerning domestic policy are also strongly linked with political values concerning foreign policy (Holsti and Rosenau 1996; Rathbun 2007). In the United States, foreign policy values are relatively stable (Eichenberg 2007), remaining much the same even after significant changes like the end of the Cold War (Holsti and Rosenau 1993)—although in time some changes have emerged (Rosati and Creed 1997).

Scholars have used many different schemes to organize foreign policy values, including a two-orientation scale comprising hierarchy and community (Rathbun 2007), a three-orientation scale comprising militarism, anticommunism, and isolationism (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987), a four-orientation scale on the two dimensions of militant versus cooperative internationalism (Holsti and Rosenau 1990), and six- (Rosati and Creed 1997), seven- (Baum and Groeling 2009), and nine-orientation scales (Dolan 2008). For simplicity's sake, we avoided using the scales with higher numbers of orientations, but we also wanted to avoid over-simplification: Even on purely domestic issues, general Left–Right orientations differ on the dimension of social versus economic policy (Uhlmann et al. 2009). Therefore, we chose to use a two-dimensional scale producing four foreign policy orientations, combining aspects of the scales used by Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) and Holsti and Rosenau (1990).

Our scale involved a Left–Right dimension (supports vs. opposes helping out-groups/foreigners as well as the in-group/fellow citizens) and an Interventionism–Isolationism dimension (supports vs. opposes foreign military intervention), producing four orientations: Leftwing Isolationism (LISO), Leftwing Interventionism (LINT), Rightwing Interventionism (RINT), and Rightwing Isolationism (RISO). (For sake of comparison with Holsti and Rosenau's (1990) classifications, LISO corresponds with Accommodationists, LINT with Internationalists, RINT with Hard-liners, and RISO with Isolationists.) Left Isolationists (LISO) would tend to believe in a more open, inclusive framework for international relations, to be more idealistic, and to want to help the world become a better place through diplomacy and economic aid. Left Interventionists (LINT) also believe in a more open, inclusive framework for international relations and are idealistic, but differ from LISO in that they are agreeable to the possible use of military force. Right Interventionists (RINT) tend to believe that the United States needs to be directly involved in world affairs and should use its economic, diplomatic, and military power to maintain world order and protect its national interests around the world. Right Isolationists (RISO) tend to believe that the United States should maintain its dominant position as the world's most powerful nation by protecting the homeland, avoiding foreign entanglements, and focusing on strengthening its economy. We have also provided a more detailed description of the four orientations in the appendices (see Online Appendix A).

Foreign policy value orientations could be divided into a nearly infinite number of classifications, and while our four-orientation classification is tractable and coherent, it sacrifices distinctions that exist within each orientation. (For instance, whether Right Interventionists prefer to build international coalitions or "go it alone," or whether Left Isolationists would support military intervention with U.N. Security Council approval.) Therefore, these four orientations should not be taken as measuring something essential or irremediable about the ways people think about foreign policy, but rather as one way in which to organize a highly diverse set of values and ideational influences—as such, we would not expect everyone to adhere strictly and exclusively to one of these four orientations, but more commonly to hybrid combinations of the four. Our classification was also chosen to provide a good fit with our review of press coverage of the conflict in Ukraine: The sources we examined in April 2015 could fairly comfortably fit within these four orientations (see Online Appendix A).

Research Method

Participants

We collected an independent MTurk sample (n = 111) to rate the persuasiveness and familiarity of the articles we designed. We also collected a second MTurk sample for the experiment (n = 556, after eliminating participants who failed the attention check or spent less than fifteen seconds reading the article). Although not nationally representative, MTurk samples are more diverse than other Internet and college student samples (Buhrmester et al. 2011), although its subject pool tends to be younger and more liberal than the general U.S. population and includes a disproportionately large percentage of whites (Berinsky et al. 2012). As such, results cannot necessarily be generalized to the nation or beyond: 52 percent were female, 76 percent were white, and their ages ranged from seventeen to seventy-seven (M = 36.1 years, SD = 13.01 years). All participants were randomly assigned to control, LISO, LINT, RINT, RISO, and multiple-frame conditions in either Ukraine or "masked" format.

Materials

We designed newspaper articles that summarized the main points of each of the LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO frames, a control article that presented bland facts about the conflict without an overarching frame, and a four-frames-in-one article that contained the major points of all the four frames (separated by introductory language like "another group of foreign policy experts argues"). To provide viewpoint diversity, our frames differed in key areas of narrative and interpretation according to the central concerns of each value orientation (Baden and Springer 2015). To avoid recency and primacy effects, we created two versions of the four-frames-in-one article: one in which the two Interventionist frames were presented first, and another in which the two Isolationist frames were presented first. We sought to limit, if not eliminate, additional influences as much as possible, so as to analyze framing effects in isolation: No cues were provided about the identity or political party of the "experts" expressing their views, nor were cues provided about the ideological bent or credibility of the media outlet. In addition, to ensure that our results were not skewed by any extraneous factors unique to the Ukraine conflict (like prejudice against Russia or the EU), we created "masked" versions of all six articles, replacing all mentions of the countries and organizations involved with "Country A, B, C" and "Political Coalition D," and so on.

Procedures

The separate group of pretest participants were asked first to describe their perspective on the Ukraine conflict in a few sentences, then to read one of the articles we designed, and finally to rate it in terms of familiarity (how often they have seen this sort of argument before in the media) and how persuasive they found it. Based on our review of media coverage of the Ukraine crisis, we expected the LISO frame to be least familiar, as we found it only in relatively marginal sources like *Democracy Now!* and *The Nation*.

Using and combining elements of past scales to measure foreign policy values, we created five multiple-choice questions to ask participants, each of which had four answers corresponding to LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO foreign policy values (see Online Appendix B). Each participant therefore had five opportunities to define their foreign policy values according to these four orientations. We also included questions asking participants to rate how strongly they held the values they selected, how many articles or TV programs on Ukraine they have been exposed to, strength of their pretreatment opinion about the Ukraine conflict, and a five-item quiz on basic facts about contemporary Ukraine (e.g., bordering countries, current president). Participants were also asked to place their political orientation on a 100-point, left/liberal to right/conservative scale, to rate how helpful the article was in forming their opinion, how many of the four orientations they wanted to read more about on the Ukraine conflict, and standard demographic questions.

Using a between-subjects design, we randomly assigned participants to read either the control article, one of the single-frame articles, or the multiple-frame article, in either Ukraine or "masked" format. After reading their assigned article, participants were asked five multiple-choice questions on the Ukraine conflict, with four answers each corresponding to the arguments of the LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO frames (see Online Appendix C). These five Ukraine questions allowed us to compare congruence between participants' stated foreign policy values in the abstract, and their preferences for concrete application of values in a real-world situation. We measured congruence between foreign policy values and Ukraine conflict opinions by calculating "change scores," subtracting foreign policy values answers from Ukraine conflict answers in each of the four value orientations (LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO). (These change scores comprise value orientation *responses* in related but different questions; also, it is possible that value consistency suggested by lower change scores may be partially due to a desire to *seem* consistent.) We expected that compared with those receiving single-frame treatments, those receiving the multiple-frame treatment would respond with Ukraine conflict answers that more closely matched their foreign policy values answers (H1 and H2).

Results

Pretest Results

We individually coded participants' open-ended statements as corresponding to the LISO, LINT, RINT, or RISO frame, or whether they did not match any of the four frames. The interrater reliability for the coders was kappa = .788 (p = .001). Averaging between the two coders' results, a majority (63.9 percent) of participants' open-ended statements were unclear or did not match any of the four frames; 13.5 percent corresponded to RINT, 11.7 percent corresponded to RISO, 7.2 percent corresponded to LINT, and only 3.6 percent corresponded to the LISO frame. Similarly, the mean ratings (from zero to ten) for familiarity with and prior exposure to the frames were 5.8 for LINT, 5.3 for RINT, 4.6 for RISO, and only 3.8 for LISO. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) found marginally significant, $F(3, 107) = 2.192$, $p = .093$, differences between these four means, and a significant, $t(109) = -2.108$, $p = .037$, difference between the mean familiarity for LISO versus mean familiarity for the other three frames as a group. Hence, the LISO frame was the least familiar to pretest participants. However, the mean persuasiveness or strength ratings (from zero to ten) for each of the four frames were between 6 and 7, with a one-way ANOVA finding no significant differences, $F(3, 107) = 0.844$, $p = .473$, between them. Each of the four frames were viewed as equally persuasive, regardless of the fact that the LISO frame was significantly less familiar to pretest participants than the other frames.

Main Results

First, to see if factors other than those we intended to test were affecting the results (for instance, a strong identification with Ukraine or Russia, subtle racial/ethnic, partisan, or expertise cues), we tested for differences in level of opinion change between the Ukraine and "masked" conditions. A one-way ANOVA found no significant differences in opinion change between the Ukraine and "masked" conditions, $F(11, 544) = 0.663$, $p = .774$. Our further analyses focused only on those receiving the Ukraine treatments.

Next, to see whether single frames shifted opinions in the direction of the frame, we performed one-sample *t* tests on mean change in the number of LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO answers to values questions pretreatment and Ukraine conflict questions posttreatment. For instance, a participant who chose four RISO and one RINT answers to the foreign policy values questions and then chose three RISO and two LISO answers to the Ukraine conflict questions after reading the LISO article, would have "change scores" of 2 for LISO (2 − 0), 0 for LINT (0 − 0), −1 for RINT (0 − 1), and −1 for RISO (3 − 4). We expected that exposure to each single frame would occasion a change in opinions away from values and toward the position of the frame.

First, we analyzed the control group: There was no statistically significant movement toward any of the four frames except for RINT, which saw an average of a one-half answer increase, $t(52) = 3.297$, $p = .002$. This could be due to instrument error, for example, a mismatch between the questions for pretreatment foreign policy values and those for posttreatment Ukraine conflict opinions, or due to a relative distaste for the RINT perspective in the abstract, but a greater preference for the application of RINT policies once contextualized in the real world. Regardless, because one of the four orientations demonstrated significant movement pre- and postcontrol treatment, we supplemented our subsequent *t* tests with regressions that compared change scores in the treatment groups with that of the control group.

All the single frames except LISO provoked movement away from pretreatment values toward the orientation of the frame to which participants were exposed. The group exposed to the LINT frame increased their LINT policy orientation by an average of more than one full answer, $t(39) = 4.253$, $p = .000$, the group exposed to the RINT frame increased their RINT policy orientation by an average of just below one full answer, $t(55) = 5.601$, $p = .000$, and those exposed to the RISO frame increased their RISO policy orientation by about two thirds of an answer, $t(46) = 2.961$, $p = .005$. In other words, whatever the proportion of pretreatment *values* answers, exposure to single LINT, RINT, and RISO frames provoked a significantly greater average of posttreatment *Ukraine conflict* answers to match the respective frame. To compare these changes with change in the control group, a dummy variable for each single-frame condition was included in simple linear regressions, with change between answers to (pre) *values* and (post) *Ukraine conflict* questions as the dependent variable. The results remained robust and significant at the $p < .05$ level; with changes in the control group as a baseline, the models predict that exposure to the LINT frame changes slightly above one answer to LINT, the RISO frame changes nearly one answer in its direction, and the RINT frame changes about half an answer in its direction (see Figure 1).

In the LISO condition, however, the opposite effect is evident: those exposed to the LISO frame *decrease* their Ukraine opinion LISO orientation by just more than half of an answer, $t(50) = -2.824$, $p = .007$). However, comparing the effects of exposure to the LISO frame with exposure to the control frame in regression reveals a smaller negative effect of about one third of one fewer LISO answer, but without reaching conventional levels of significance, $\beta = -.329$, $t(102) = -1.502$, $p = .295$. Nonetheless, the LISO frame proves to be an outlier, producing a small backfire effect *away* from

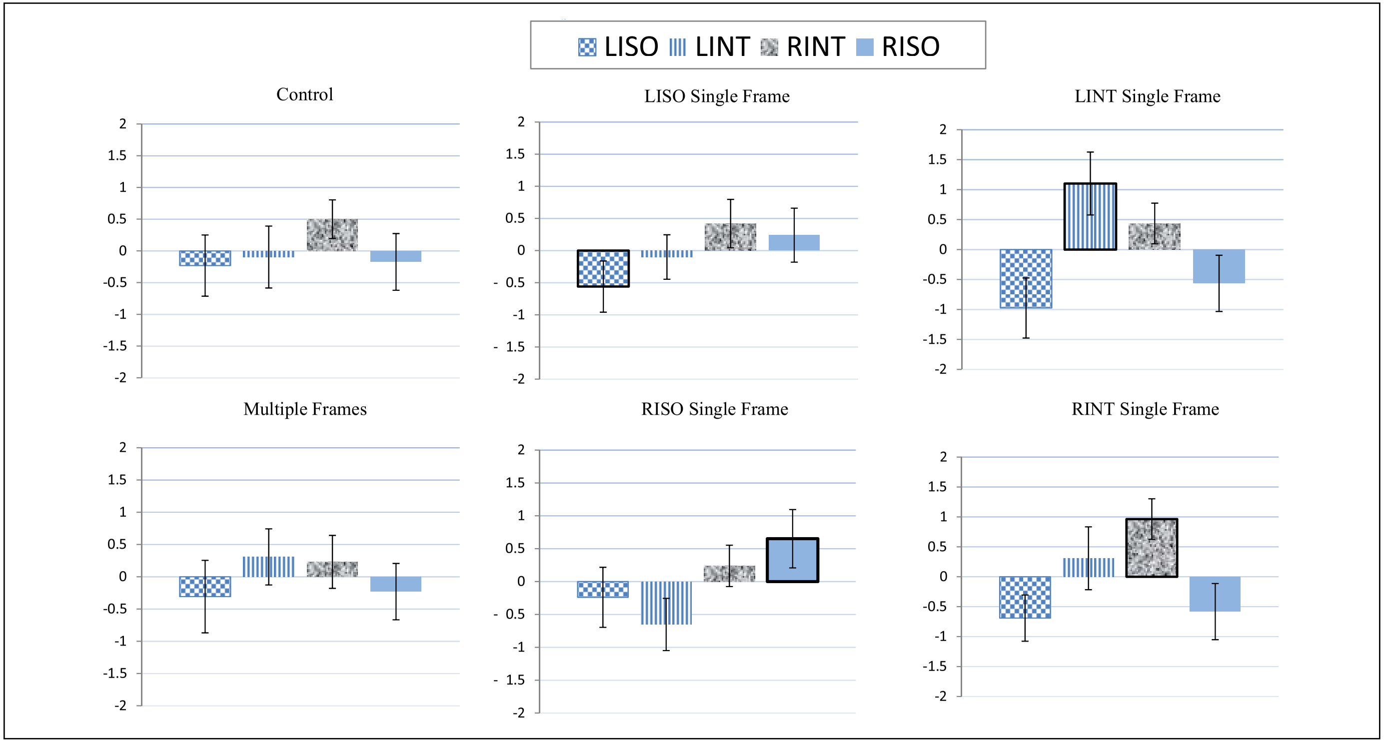

Figure 1. Change scores posttreatment.
Note. Change scores are calculated by subtracting the number of LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO answers to the Ukraine policy questions (after treatment) from the number of LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO answers to the foreign policy values questions (before treatment), respectively. LISO = Leftwing Isolationism; LINT = Leftwing Interventionism; RINT = Rightwing Interventionism; RISO = Rightwing Isolationism.

the LISO orientation. H1 is partially supported by these results: Exposure to single LINT, RINT, and RISO frames provoked change toward the perspective of the frame, while exposure to the single LISO frame caused a small backfire effect.

In contrast, and consistent with H2, exposure to the multiple-frame article resulted in no statistically significant movement toward any of the four orientations. Likewise, compared with movement in the control group in simple regression analyses, exposure to the multiple-frames article resulted in no statistically significant movement toward any of the four orientations (for full results, see Online Appendix D).

However, these results could be due to greater polarization among those receiving the multiple-frame treatment, with strong adherents of each set of values becoming even more supportive of their preferred position, and all participants largely cancelling out each other's changes. To explore opinion change across those participants who did and did not receive a frame matching their foreign policy values, we created a dummy variable indicating whether the participant was randomly assigned to read a frame *matching* their values (this applies to those who chose the same value at least three out of five times; those who chose a more diverse array of policy values were coded as 0 regardless of their treatment group). For those receiving single frames (in either Ukraine or "masked" conditions), we then ran four univariate ANOVAs using this dummy variable as the fixed factor, and change in LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO scores, respectively, as the dependent variable. For those receiving the multiple-frame treatment, we created dummy variables indicating whether the participant chose a majority of LISO, LINT, RINT, or RISO values, and ran four univariate ANOVAs using these as the fixed factors, with change in one of the corresponding orientation scores as the dependent variable. (Participants in the multiple-frames condition were exposed to all four frames—so all those *with a majority* in any of the four value orientations were exposed to a frame matching their values.) This allowed us to compare the influence of single frames versus multiple frames across the four foreign policy orientations. Compared with those exposed to single frames, those exposed to multiple frames had their own preferred values *less* reinforced and were *less* influenced to adopt values different from their own, in every condition across the board (see Online Appendix F, for full results). Supporting H2, these results indicate that instead of provoking polarization, exposure to multiple frames may tend to moderate opinions (Figures 2 and 3).[1]

To explore some of the other influences operating alongside frames, we ran regressions on the change from stated values to opinions on Ukraine policy, including several other variables: age, a "female" dummy variable, education (from 1, *some high school*, to 6, *completed graduate school*), income, political ideology (from *left/liberal*, 0, to *right/conservative*, 100), self-reported strength of foreign policy values (from 0 to 10), knowledge of Ukraine (total correct of five questions), strength of pretreatment opinion about the Ukraine conflict, self-reported amount of exposure to articles/TV news segments on Ukraine, rating of how helpful the treatment article was in forming one's opinion, and total number of the four perspectives participants reported they wanted to learn more about ("frame diversity desire"). In line with previous framing research, no single factor reliably explained variation across all conditions. Age and

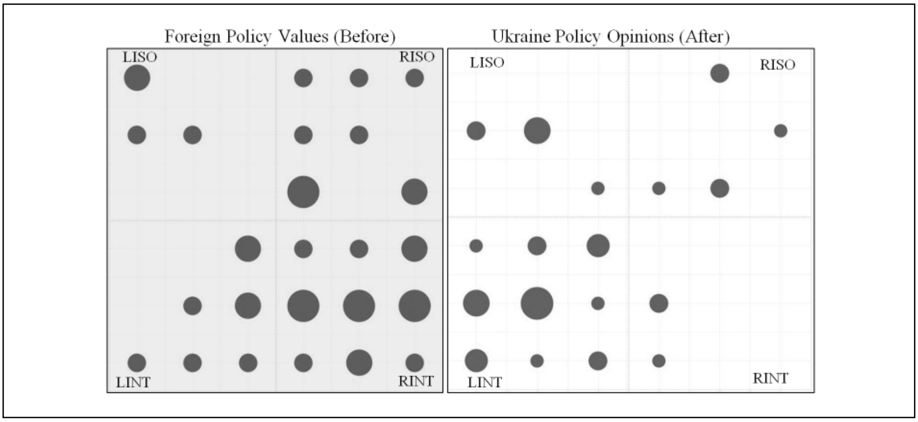

Figure 2. Exposure to single-frame LINT.
Note. Circles represent, in ascending order of size, the self-placement of 1–2, 3–4, 4–5, and 6+ participants, respectively, within the foreign policy values quadrants (before), and Ukraine policy opinion quadrants (after). LINT = Leftwing Interventionism; LISO = Leftwing Isolationism; RISO = Rightwing Isolationism; RINT = Rightwing Interventionism.

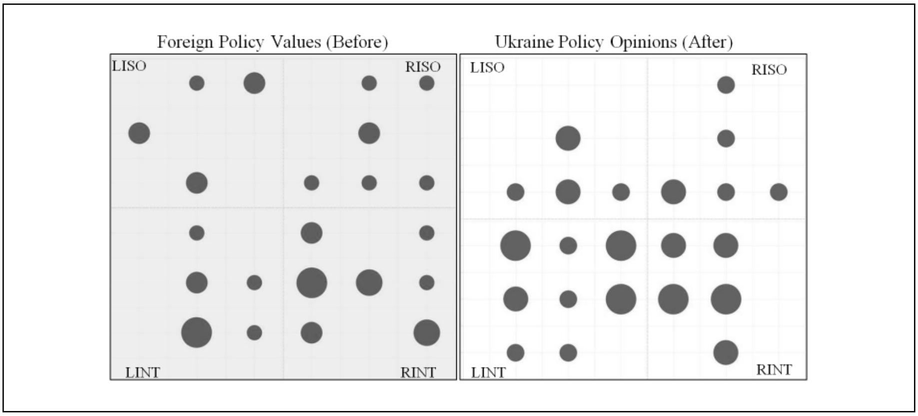

Figure 3. Multiple frames.
Note. LISO = Leftwing Isolationism; RISO = Rightwing Isolationism; LINT = Leftwing Interventionism; RINT = Rightwing Interventionism.

media exposure did not reach statistical significance in any condition, and they were removed from models when doing so provided a better fit (for the full models, see Online Appendix F).

Four separate regressions with the same predictors were run on change in LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO answers, respectively, for those receiving the multiple-frame treatment (again, compared with the control group). The models predict LISO to be a *more* likely choice for males, β = −.201, $t(88) = -2.064$, $p = .042$, and those further to the right/conservative, β = .398, $t(88) = 4.044$, $p = .022$, while LINT was predicted to be a *less* likely choice for the more educated, β = −.339, $t(78) = -3.299$, $p = .001$, and those further to the right/conservative, β = −.313, $t(78) = -3.097$, $p = .003$. RINT was predicted to be a more likely choice for those with higher levels of education, β = .223, $t(92) = 2.051$, $p = .044$, and (at marginal significance) a less likely choice for those with more knowledge of Ukraine, β = −.194, $t(92) = -1.691$, $p = .095$. The only statistically significant predictor of change for RISO answers was the rating of how helpful the multiple-frame article was: the more helpful participants found the article, the more likely they would move *away* from the RISO orientation in their Ukraine policy answers, β = −.223, $t(84) = -2.094$, $p = .039$.

Overall, knowledge about Ukraine and strength of adherence to one's foreign policy values had a weak dampening effect on opinion change after reading the treatment articles: those with greater knowledge and confidence stayed somewhat closer to their stated values when answering questions on Ukraine policy. Strength of values and opinion change were weakly, negatively correlated, $r(227) = -.092$, $p = .082$. Knowledge about Ukraine and opinion change were also weakly, negatively correlated, $r(227) = -.109$, $p = .051$. This provides some support for H3.

Discussion

Our results provided support for H1, that exposure to single frames would move opinions away from foreign policy values and toward the position of the frame. This was the case for LINT, RINT, and RISO frames, and this result held after comparing movement with the control group. However, the LISO frame provoked a "backfire" effect (Nyhan and Reifler 2010), pushing participants *away* from the positions advocated in the LISO article (although compared with the control group, the movement away from LISO was not significant). Chong and Druckman (2007) found backfire effects for *weak* frames, but our frames were all of substantially similar strength (as revealed by pretest ratings). However, the LISO frame was substantially less familiar to pretest participants—they had been exposed to it less frequently in the media—so, just as Chong and Druckman (2007: 645) conclude, "Frames that draw on unavailable beliefs (as these frames do according to our pretest) do not affect opinions."

These results reinforce two recurring normative concerns with media framing. First, media reports that rely on one frame of an issue influence readers to adopt that frame, regardless of the reader's values. Second, perspectives on an issue that do not commonly appear in media presentations may suffer a handicap, such that when finally exposed to uncommon perspectives, readers may be inclined to reject them due to their unfamiliarity.

The results provided support for H2 that exposure to multiple frames would not significantly move participants' policy opinions away from their values, without causing polarization. As in Sniderman and Theriault's (2004) findings on *dual* frames, participants stayed closer to their values after reading all four frames on the Ukraine conflict. Also, instead of polarizing opinions (i.e., those with LISO values moving further toward the LISO orientation, etc.), exposure to multiple frames seems to have *moderated* opinions. Participants receiving the multiple-frame treatment evinced Ukraine policy opinions reflecting not only their own value orientation but also some of the divergent perspectives reflecting other value orientations. Here, competing frames seem to have provided a “knowledge constraint” on the process of motivated reasoning (Kunda 1990). Interestingly, among those exposed to all four frames, the more conservative tended to be persuaded by the LISO orientation while the more liberal tended to be persuaded by the LINT orientation.

For example, imagine a staunch conservative who tends to get her information from conservative media that primarily feature RINT perspectives on foreign policy issues. This conservative, like those of all ideological persuasions, would be liable to engage in motivated reasoning when considering the conflict in Ukraine. Yet when reading an article describing the conflict using four equally strong frames, this conservative would be presented with new information undergirding contrary frames—for instance, the history of NATO expansion or the extreme-right elements in Ukraine’s government—which she would not normally be exposed to on a media diet of ideologically congenial single (RINT) frames. This information may pose a “knowledge constraint” to motivated reasoning: It becomes harder to view Russia as an evil aggressor and Ukraine as a good victim when one knows that NATO has continued to expand toward Russia despite earlier promises to the contrary, and that the postcoup Ukrainian government has ties with extreme-right groups. Likewise, information about the antidemocratic nature of the Putin regime in the RINT and LINT frames may pose a knowledge constraint to liberal ideologues who expose themselves disproportionately to the LISO perspective, making them less comfortable with accommodating Russian interests in Ukraine.

H3 received some support from the results: The more knowledge participants had about Ukraine and the stronger participants’ foreign policy values, the less influence frames exerted over participants’ opinions on the Ukraine conflict. Unlike Lecheler and de Vreese (2011), we found a small, marginally significant *negative* correlation between knowledge about Ukraine and opinion change after treatment. (This could be because we measured Ukraine-specific knowledge, rather than general political knowledge: One might be well informed about politics generally, but might not have paid much specific attention to the conflict in Ukraine.) This correlation supports the analysis in Beattie (2016) that the more information one has on a topic, organized into schematic structures, the less likely that additional information will change one’s opinion at the point of exposure. (However, our experiment only measured opinion change at one point in time; Lecheler and de Vreese’s (2011) findings would suggest that over time, those with medium levels of knowledge about Ukraine would display more persistent framing effects, while those with high and low levels of knowledge would be less affected.) Also, we found a small, marginally significant negative correlation between strength of adherence to one’s foreign policy values and opinion change after treatment, in accordance with Hansen’s (2007) results.

Our sample differed in several respects from a nationally representative random sample, and to this extent, our results are not broadly generalizable. There are additional questions about external validity, particularly in light of the tendency of partisans to choose media sources that reflect their ideology. In practice, it is more likely that news seekers would encounter single frames from ideologically congenial outlets than from those of a different political persuasion, and they would be very unlikely to encounter multiple-frame articles of the sort used in the present experiment. This goes to the core of the News Diversity standard: that the norms of professional journalism *should*, but do not presently, include the directive to present several ideologically diverse perspectives in each news article. Therefore, the present study should be considered only a first step in exploring the consequences of adopting such a standard. Furthermore, this design does not address practical constraints (column inches, airtime) news companies face. Also, we tested an unobtrusive issue not well known to most participants; tests of issues about which readers already have well-developed, extensive schemas are less likely to evince opinion change—especially at one point in time, though possibly over longer periods as well. However, this remains untested, and may be a worthwhile direction for future research. Likewise, opinion responses may have been partially primed by the treatment articles, reflecting only a transitory, unstable opinion—which future research measuring opinion effects over time across single and multiple frames may be able to clarify.

Conclusion

These results reinforce Mauro Porto's (2007a) argument for a "News Diversity" standard: that the media in democracies should take care to provide multiple, equally strong frames for any given issue. This would help avoid the normative concerns surrounding framing effects, whereby single frames influence people to adopt opinions out of line with their values, without causing greater ideological polarization. Even if one views ideological polarization in a positive light, as the result of individuals merely following and deepening their commitments to their own values, *single* frames only allow those whose values match the frame to follow and deepen their commitment to their own values. Those with different sets of values are poorly served by single frames that contradict their values; only when multiple, equally strong frames are provided are those of all value persuasions well served. Audiences can choose to ignore perspectives they disagree with, but it is harder for them to come up with perspectives on their own, particularly when such perspectives require information the media do not provide (Beattie 2016; Entman 1989). This is particularly clear in the case of the LISO frame, which requires information regarding U.S. support for the coup that brought in the pro-Western regime, that regime's alliance with far-right elements, U.S. corporate interests in the region, the danger of nuclear war, and so on, for the LISO frame to be coherent. Without exposure to the information (whether accurate or not) comprising the LISO perspective, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for audiences to develop a LISO perspective on their own.

Of course, if any given real-world occurrence x is most accurately and fairly communicated by frame A, and across-the-board *less* accurately and fairly communicated by frames B-Z, then normatively we would prefer for all media outlets to communicate the occurrence of *x* using only frame *A*. Mere agreement between less accurate frames *B* to *Z* and people's value commitments would seem less normatively important than the agreement between frame *A* and the real-world occurrence of *x* the frame is meant to communicate. However, in the absence of well-intentioned expert agreement on the across-the-board superiority of frame *A* versus frames *B* through *Z*—a condition we would expect to obtain in most, if not all, instances of complex, politically charged events—we are left in the epistemically conservative position of preferring a variety of competing frames, holding on to Oliver Wendell Holmes's hope that the "best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market" (Abrams 1919: 630).

Although there is a dearth of research into the number of frames commonly used by U.S. media outlets, Benson's (2009) study found fewer frames in United States compared with French media outlets—despite strong theoretical reasons to expect U.S. media outlets to be *more* "multiperspectival" (Hallin and Mancini 2004), that is, to present more frames. Overall, there is a need for further research into the number of frames commonly used in media reports, as well as whether they are equally strong and presented without preference. Also, in future framing studies, greater ecological validity can be obtained by selecting real-world media reports with greater and lesser frame diversity and equality to test for framing effects.

The "News Diversity" standard—that all media reports should provide multiple, competing, equally strong frames—may avoid the normative concerns that arise from single-framed media reports. Multiple frames at least provide audiences with a choice of perspective on political issues, allowing them to form opinions in closer accordance with their values—or, moderating their opinions after hearing arguments arising from different sets of values or factual information. Future research is needed to test for the effects of multiple, competing frames on a variety of other political issues (we would expect broadly similar results), and on the determinants of frame influence across different issue areas. Furthermore, the current trend in framing research to test for over-time effects is a promising development, and would benefit from including more than two competing frames per issue.

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Note

1. Figures 2 and 3 display the foreign policy values and Ukraine's policy opinion positions of participants in a two-dimensional space, with larger circles indicating greater numbers of participants. For instance, a participant responding with five Leftwing Isolationism (LISO)

answers would be located in the upper left-most of the upper left (LISO) quadrant, and a participant responding with two LISO answers and three Rightwing Interventionism (RINT) answers would be located toward the center, in the upper left-most of the lower right (RINT) quadrant. In the Leftwing Interventionism (LINT; Figure 2) single-frame condition, Ukraine policy opinions clearly shift into the LINT quadrant; in the multiple-frame condition (Figure 3), Ukraine policy opinions are moderate and are drawn toward the center.

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Social Media and Political Campaigning: Changing Terms of Engagement?

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Abstract

This paper develops a way for analyzing the structure of campaign communications within Twitter. The structure of communication affordances creates opportunities for a horizontal organization power within Twitter interactions. However, one cannot infer the structure of interactions as they materialize from the formal properties of the technical environment in which the communications occur. Consequently, the paper identifies three categories of empowering communication operations that can occur on Twitter: Campaigns can respond to others, campaigns can retweet others, and campaigns can call for others to become involved in the campaign on their own terms. The paper operationalizes these categories in the context of the 2015 U.K. general election. To determine whether Twitter is used to empower laypersons, the profiles of each account retweeted and replied to were retrieved and analyzed using natural language processing to identify whether an account is from a political figure, member of the media, or some other public figure. In addition, tweets and retweets are compared with respect to the manner key election issues are discussed. The findings indicate that empowering uses of Twitter are fairly marginal, and retweets use almost identical policy language as the original campaign tweets.

Keywords

political participation, election campaign, political parties, Internet

This paper investigates the structure of relationships formed by political campaigns with their supporters on social media. Social media platforms have been hailed as potentially revolutionary, creating horizontal spaces of communication inside

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otherwise hierarchical political campaigns. The elite control over campaign communications during the broadcast era of politics has given way to social media platforms that relate users symmetrically and reciprocally with equal capacities as senders and receivers of communications (Castells 2009; Jensen et al. 2012). This facilitates dialogical relationships and the decentralized production of political narratives (Jensen and Bang 2013). However, it would be a mistake to infer communication operations from the technical attributes of a communication medium. Political campaigns often use Twitter as a means to shape debates, influencing and framing issues within the campaign (Kreiss 2016b). Campaigns may create a monologue through their tweets, retaining a hierarchical authority structure, or they may empower ordinary citizens or laypersons as co-producers of campaign messaging.

Prevailing accounts of the function of social media in political life either point to its technical affordances that facilitate political mobilization outside of institutionalized spaces or its role as an extension of relatively technocratic communications. Social movement studies have emphasized the role of social media in creating opportunity structures, organizational infrastructures, and spaces for the formation of counter-publics (Bennett and Segerberg 2013; della Porta 2013). However, their import for political campaigns has largely followed a technocratic tradition. Nielsen (2011) argues that specialized websites and social media platforms remain marginal to mobilization practices as emails centrally distributing instructions outward are the most common digital form of communication. Generally, digital media have been shown to facilitate the management rather than empowerment of supporters (Howard 2006); however, these findings may be a bit dated at this point.

This paper examines the role of social media communications in bringing campaign supporters into the campaign itself through an investigation of uses of Twitter by political campaigns during the 2015 British general election. The aim of the research is to determine whether campaign supporters' social media communications affect the communications of campaigns in some consequential manner. Hence, it focuses on campaign social media communications for evidence of such impact. The first section develops an account of authority relationships with respect to the range of communication operations available to campaigns and supporters operating within Twitter's social media platform. The results find evidence that most campaigns have embraced aspects of the interactive architecture in varying degrees and sought to involve persons on their own terms, though these actions remain marginal and often concentrated among smaller parties.

Campaigning, Political Organization, and the Structure of Political Authority

Political organization is enacted within and through authoritative communications. The various functions of campaigns—winning the battle of ideas, converting and mobilizing supporters, providing supporters informational claims and topics, and so forth—are normally carried out through technologically mediated communication channels (Gronbeck 1978; Norris 1999). For much of the twentieth century, the sources of political information were quite limited in comparison with today with political parties, newspapers, and a few television and radio stations broadcasting as the primary channels through which political communications reached a public (Converse 1962; Prior 2007). Campaigns had ready access to both broadcast outlets as well as their own direct communications with party members that led to a relatively confined and controllable communication environment in comparison with today. With few media outlets and campaigns increasingly reliant on communication experts (Lilleker and Negrine 2002; Strömbäck 2007), campaign communications became dominated by the campaigns themselves participating in largely monologic communication flows. These communications may circulate through consequential feedback loops within the public (Beck et al. 2002; Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), but there was no technical capacity for direct dialogue between ordinary citizens and the campaigns.

In contrast to political communications during the broadcast era of politics, the communication capacities of social media users are, as a technical matter, equal. In relatively similar measure, these platforms make possible participation by campaigns and individuals in shaping the production of meaning online. Political campaigns, parties, and organizations are looking for new ways to mobilize supporters, particularly online by providing interactive spaces for participation and engagement (Bang 2009; Bimber et al. 2012). The online experiences they create are structured to varying degrees by the political campaign in ways that facilitate, constrain, and determine the kinds of communications produced by supporters. Although changes in technology may make it easier for campaigns and supporters to engage one another on equal terms, we should not expect that campaigns embrace a participatory democratic ethos online which is otherwise absent from the offline campaign. Nevertheless, they may develop ways in which to empower or otherwise engage supporters even if only on terms that are mutually beneficial to both the campaign and its supporters.

Digital Media and Political Empowerment

Research into the involvement of digital media in political campaigning have generally centered on the uses of technology by categories of actors such as campaign organizations or individual citizens. Viewed in terms of the operation of campaign organizations, such studies have produced accounts of an Internet structured by gatekeepers that dramatically limit the capacities of ordinary citizens to influence wider debates (Hindman 2009) and "structured interactivity" (Kreiss 2012: 11) or "controlled interactivity" (Stromer-Galley 2014: 14) in political campaign web spaces. Similarly, although Chadwick (2013) sees social media as creating opportunity structures which make for greater fluidity in political spaces, campaigns—particularly successful campaigns—domesticate "hybrid social movement repertoires" within a hierarchical organizational structure (p. 129). Networks of supporters may assist the campaign in various ways, but they remain outside the formal organization and its decision-making structure. The capacities for interaction in web spaces organized by campaigns may attract supporters, but ultimately, decisions over campaign messaging, policy, strategies, and tactics remain with the formal campaign organization. Framed as such, citizens lack a structural location from which their social media communications could effect change in the organization of power within a political campaign.

At the same time, it is often argued that digital media have a democratizing effect on political campaigning. The interactive capacities of digital media create a participatory architecture enabling interactions between campaigns and supporters that otherwise does not exist (Lilleker and Jackson 2010). In addition, social media spaces facilitate "citizen-initiated campaigning" producing messaging not directed by the party (Gibson 2015). Web 2.0 platforms facilitate the granular contributions of individuals operating within self-organized spaces such as Benkler's (2006) communities of peer production. However, it is not clear to what extent lay social media communications might be incorporated within campaigns. Whereas peer production normally involves collaboration between persons with specialized skills that can give rise more readily to horizontal power structures based on interdependencies that may exist between contributors who need each other to complete an overall task, that same relationship does not obtain between political parties and their supporters. Whether these citizen efforts are consequential, affecting subsequent campaign communications remains to be seen.

Empowerment in these spaces is a property of the interactions rather than the campaigns or their supporters as a group. Identifying empowerment is not straightforward as any act of power is simultaneously coercive and empowering. Campaign instructions to supporters may have a coercive effect of organizing their subsequent actions while empowering supporters to better bring about the election of their preferred candidate and/or government. Luhmann (1982) defines the exercise of power as the selection of "one specific possibility from among many and when this selection is in turn accepted by others as a premise for their own decision making" (p. 151). Power involves distributed effects and reciprocal relationships as the exercise of power entails its acceptance. Empowerment happens when one whose selections are otherwise not the premise for subsequent decisions makes a selection that then becomes the premise for subsequent decisions such as selections regarding campaign messaging.

Organizational power increases to the extent the organization, and not a particular authority within the organization, increases its capacity to pass along the premises for subsequent decisions. In complex and highly differentiated societies, Luhmann (1982) argues, organizations often are only able to increase their influence to the extent that capacities for making selections that create meanings are distributed. Campaigns have been experimenting with web 2.0 spaces as a means to combat both attract supporters and more effectively cut through the noise to connect more effectively with voters (Gibson 2015). The unique and messages of campaign supporters in communications with friends and family may prove more persuasive than any campaign slogan. It may therefore serve campaign interests to facilitate capacities for their supporters to customize campaign messaging. As campaigns lack a monopoly on support, command and control authority structures may be ineffective as the widespread declines in party identification attest (Dalton 2013; Hay 2007; Mair 2013). Campaigns may be able to pass along the premises for decision making, in this case, persuade citizens to vote for them, to the extent they loosen their control over messaging.

Despite the image of decentralized messaging and interactive experiences within modern campaigns, scholars suggest that these spaces are all carefully managed and authority remains with the campaign. However, whether an actor retains power over another depends on one's level of analytical abstraction. Kreiss's (2012) account of Obama's rebuff of calls for changes to the national security courts by supporters on my.BarackObama.com is illustrative. This might be taken as evidence that even in a campaign as decentralized as Obama's, power ultimately remained with the campaign. However, supporters were permitted to voice their dissent over the policy and develop this position through their interactions with others, a form of structural empowerment with potentially embarrassing consequences. Kreiss notes that may have been a calculated move by the campaign, providing a space for supporters to "vent" without relinquishing messaging control, simultaneously creating capacities for both the campaign (message control) and its supporters (venting). In the end, the campaign had to respond, which may be evidence of power exercised by Obama's supporters, and the supporters had to decide whether to remain with the campaign, a power they never relinquished. The campaign may also be said to respond to power exerted by a wider public that supported the existing policies. Even under the counterfactual condition that Obama acceded to protesters' demands over the operation of national security courts, his actions could have still been taken as evidence of control remaining with the campaign as such a concession could be a strategic move to ultimately move the votes of key constituencies when viewed from the perspective of the campaign. Although such macro-level accounts may provide plausible descriptions of the overall authority structure of a campaign, they do not provide a basis on which one could infer the role of individual social media interactions within a wider power structure without already having determined the parameters of that power structure including the status of campaign supporters.

Taking communications as the constitutive basis of political life, Luhmann's account of power is particularly useful in theorizing the operation of campaign power dynamics through social media communications. Power relationships are a property of communications, situating senders and receivers of messages in relation to one another (Bang 2003; Easton 1965; Luhmann 1982). If we take the amplification of ordinary citizen voices as empowerment, such as Hindman (2009) does, empowerment stems from the use of social media by a campaign to amplify the voices of ordinary citizens. Campaigns may increase their communicative capacities not through message centralization but the decentralization of communication selections where supporters can make decisions regarding campaign messaging. In this way, the campaign may distribute power over messaging, empowering supporters to develop their own campaign narratives and messaging which may better leverage the two-step flow model (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948) of campaign influence, distinct from the repetition of campaign frames, themes, and issues.

Hence, campaigns may empower voices that present the same messaging as the campaign itself, or it may amplify voices that differ from its own, contributing additional selections of themes, issues, or frames. Luhmann's account of power captures a range of communication operations that happen within social media spaces: Campaigns may engage other users in dialogue, they may retransmit the messages of others, or they may encourage others to become engaged on their own terms. Although supporters of a campaign often independently develop campaign memes, communications empowered by the campaign are functionally different as they emerge from within the communication spaces created by the campaign itself. The campaign signifies that these social media posts are in some way sanctioned.

Each social media platform has particular communication affordances. Twitter emphasizes short, predominantly text-based messaging, though the capacities for images and videos is expanding. The text-based core of Twitter communications is central to the experience of other social media platforms and likely to remain so (Carmody 2016). We define empowering campaign communications with respect to the communication operations possible within Twitter, focusing on the text-based operations that are common across multiple social media platforms. By defining empowerment with respect to communication operations, we avoid the contested terrain of what constitutes "real" or "authentic" engagement linked differing democratic visions. We identify three kinds of empowering communications possible within Twitter's platform. First, campaigns may engage in dialogue with others. Communications are always in some way responsive to a rhetorical situation but moving from a monologue to a dialogue grants standing for a speaker seen as needing a response (Bakhtin 1981). Although campaigns may strategically determine which tweets to respond to, responses involve a selection on the part of the campaign which legitimizes the communicative selections (topics, problematics, points of inquiry, etc.) initiated by a member of the public which in turn becomes the proximate motivational ground and structure of the campaign's reply (Bakhtin 1981; Toulmin 2003). The operation of power need not be zero sum as a member of the public, and the campaign may become structurally advantaged in different ways through a reply. Whether a tweet is responded to or retransmitted involves various selections on the part of the campaign which may be calculated with respect to their perceived benefit; however, in such cases, this benefit does not arise without the circular flow of authority. If responses were nothing more than a cynical simulation of interactivity, the campaign benefits may be largely mooted or even negative. Even if campaigns engage supporters in this way only for strategic benefit, the fact that they need to signals a change in the power structure between campaigns and supporters.

Second, campaigns may retransmit the communications produced by supporters. The retransmission of others' communications distributes the selection of terms which define a topic or issue on behalf of the campaign (Burke 1966). Retransmission of a supporter's message by a campaign amplifies the range of the message, and it may, in an additional sense, empower a supporter if the original tweet represents a change in the communicative selections of the campaign. For example, a campaign's retweet of a supporter offering different grounds for voting for the campaign than those offered by the campaign itself would delegate in that instance authority over the organization of campaign communications. By contrast, retweeting a message describing issues in the same terms as the campaign may empower the voice of an individual but without substantively changing the overall frames and discourses communicated.

The *who* retweeted or responded to matters with respect to whether empowerment ensues. Responding to other campaigns or media representations may be an extension of the political warfare between them or an effort to influence future reporting. Retweeting other political authorities or newspapers can serve as a means to involve surrogates as advocates for the campaign without empowering laypersons. However, to the extent campaigns retweet or respond to ordinary citizens, this can be empowering. Hindman (2009) reminds us that there is a distinction speaking and being listened to. Both replies and retweeting by campaigns signify that a communication has been listened to even if only for strategic reasons.

Third, they may invite persons to contribute to and participate in the campaign on their own terms with little direction from the campaign itself. The architecture of digital environments creates capacities facilitating certain actions while hampering or forclosing others (Crozier 2012; Lessig 2006). In contrast to hierarchical spaces of engagement that define what is to be done and how one can channel their energies into the campaign, digital environments may create capacities for persons to participate in relatively unstructured ways. In an entrepreneurial mode, "participants have a high degree of autonomy and may and may design collective action in ways that are not sanctioned or controlled by a central authority" (Flanagin et al. 2006: 37). Facilitation of unstructured participation is not only a product of digital tools but also may be a consequence of "invitational rhetoric" (Foss and Griffin 1995: 2) that invites participants to voice their own reasons for supporting a campaign so as to not assimilate a participant's identity with the campaign identity. U.K. Labour used such a tactic with the "#changewesee" campaign in 2010, asking supporters to highlight the positive change, from their perspectives, brought about during the previous years of Labour government (Jensen and Anstead 2014). This is not to say that even the most structured calls for participation foreclose the capacity for customization (Nielsen 2012). However, the manner in campaigns structure their calls for participation enact differing authority relationships with supporters.

Within the Twitter platform, replying, retweeting, and inviting persons to participate on their own terms constitute the range of communication operations available to campaigns seeking to empower supporters. Their emergence from within the campaign differentiates these tweets from other tweets about the election contest. Each of these communications involves supporters as participants in the campaign with varying degrees of recognition and autonomy, deviating from a traditional hierarchical model of campaign organization. We empirically operationalize these forms of empowerment in the context of the 2015 U.K. general election. The aim is not to provide a totalizing account of the structure of power within a campaign, but to show how individual campaign tweets function to empower supporters (or not). The advantage of this approach is that it enables one to analytically move from discrete campaign communications, of which power structures are properties, to aggregate characterizations of a field of communication in the campaign. This provides a systematic empirical grounding for claims regarding the operation of power within a political campaign.

Data and Method

The data are composed of the tweets from the leaders and the main parties contesting the 2015 U.K. general election. The United Kingdom has a range of larger and smaller parties including significant regional parties and provides a relatively hard case for empowerment as the centrality of party organizations reduces the need for grassroots supporters relative to the United States where the primary process necessitates campaigns bootstrap their own organizations independent of parties (Anstead and Chadwick 2009). More than 91 percent of the population has Internet access, which puts the United Kingdom among the most connected countries in Europe (Internet World Statistics 2016). In 2015, 18.6 percent of Britons used Twitter, and Twitter users tend to be younger, better educated, favored Labour and minor parties over the Conservatives, and were more politically attentive than the overall population (Mellon and Prosser 2016). Although Twitter is used by a small subset of the British public, the British Election Study (BES) has recognized its importance in electoral politics by including a data set of campaign issues and campaign tweet mentions in their 2015 study. Although parties operate a wide range of accounts with specific messaging roles (such as @Toryhealth, dedicated to issues concerning health care provision), the main party accounts and those of their leaders are sites of centralized campaign communication for the national level of the campaign (Jensen and Anstead 2014). Online Appendix A contains a full list of the accounts analyzed.

Party and party leader tweets and their retweets were collected from Twitter's application programming interface (API). The data collected are continuous from 12:00 a.m. March 31, 2015, coinciding with the dissolution of Parliament, until 8:00 a.m. on May 7, 2015, Election Day. The resulting corpus contains 22,408 tweets and retweets. Despite Mellon and Prosser's findings on the partisan leanings of Twitter users, this does not appear to have influenced the use of Twitter by the major parties as Liberal Democrats and Conservatives produced more tweets per day, on average, 135.76 and 91.57, respectively, than Labour's 62.19. The daily campaign tweets for leaders and parties are presented in Figure 1. The spikes in daily tweeting by the campaigns correspond with the debates held on April 2 (the ITV Leaders' Debate), the April 16 (the Northern Ireland Leaders' Debate), and the April 30 (Question Time Debate).

Replies were operationalized with respect to their classification within Twitter's API as a message that a user signaled a response to by clicking a reply button on a Twitter interface. The data contain 2,033 replies, 9.08 percent of tweets produced by the campaigns. The profiles of each screen name replied to were extracted and the description lines coded for references to four categories of accounts: media outlets, designating that person as employed in some news production capacity with a broadcast media organization; politicians and political party officials or other official party-linked Twitter accounts; official Twitter accounts of interest groups or those working for interest groups; and bloggers. Those tweeting in a professional capacity normally indicate as much in the profile biographies that are used to establish that identity. However, one case, Danny Alexander of the Liberal Democrats was manually coded as his profile biography was blank. Cases resulted where a Twitter user occupied both a political role

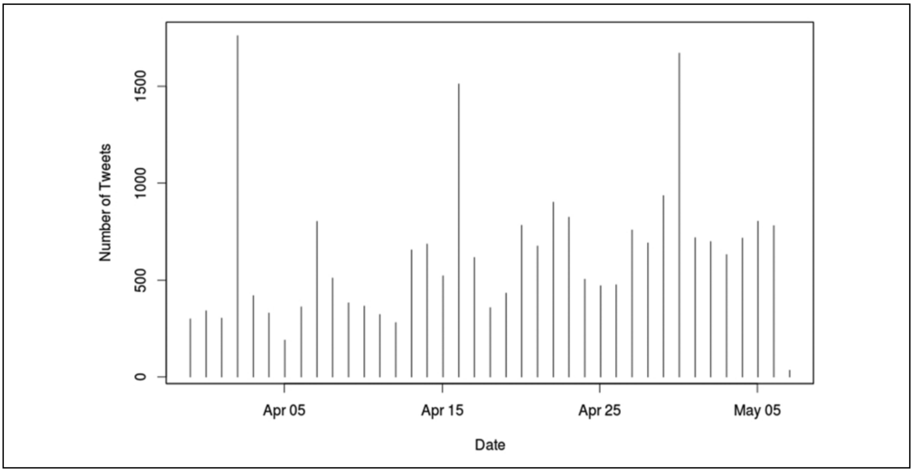

Figure 1. Number of campaign tweets per day during 2015 U.K. election campaign.

and a media or interest group role. Such accounts were manually inspected and classified as "political" given that the context of an electoral campaign renders the political identity primary. The coding of these profiles was conducted using natural language processing to match keywords and phrases (Bird et al. 2009). To check for errors in the coding, a summation of the false positives and false negatives on a random subsample. This follows verification processed used by Nolan (2002). This yielded a 3.33 percent error rate on a subsample of twenty reply profiles.

Apart from the parties themselves and interest groups that often take an active role in politics, formal media organizations can be particularly influential. The United Kingdom has a liberal media system with a reputation for both autonomy and journalistic professionalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Political blogging can be influential in campaigns (Lilleker and Jackson 2013), and political blogging is well established in the United Kingdom with some blogs capturing readerships not far behind the blogs of major newspapers (Chadwick 2013). Campaign replies to other political figures, media outlets, bloggers, and interest groups may be seen as part of the daily flows of elite campaign interventions aiming to influence political debate (Kreiss 2016b). Replying to any of these four categories of accounts engages an already empowered discourse position.

Retweets (RTs), or tweets which forward another user's tweet, include all mechanical retweets created through selecting the retweet button on the web or a Twitter client as well as any tweet that begins with "RT" followed by a Twitter handle. For our purposes, whether a user selected the retweet button wrote "RT" and the full text of the original tweet makes no substantive difference insofar as the tweet involves retransmission of the words of another. There were 10,294 retweets, constituting 45.94 percent of all tweets produced by the campaigns. The screen name of each retweeted author was extracted and coded using the same categories described earlier. Errors were inspected using the previous technique with a resulting error rate of 0.00 percent.

In addition to the location of each account retweeted within the power structure of campaign communications, we also examine a second attribute: the extent to which retweets introduce a new ways of talking about policy issues. To determine whether retweets bring in a different vocabulary or way of speaking, creating a hybrid language (Bakhtin 1981), we use word correlations to identify differences in the manner in which key policy terms are discussed in campaign tweets and their retweets. We selected three policy areas based on their relevance as key issues in the campaign according to opinion polls. The three top policy issues during the campaign were the National Health Service (NHS), immigration and refugee issues, and the economy and jobs (UK Polling Report 2015). Given the correlation method identifies the term correlates of a single word, the selection of single words to operationalize each of these policy areas was determined by identifying the most common words corresponding to each policy area in the tweets: "NHS," "immigration," and "economy."

The meanings associated with each policy area was operationalized as the cluster of correlated words with each policy term. This approach was selected because it scales well across large bodies of text and is a useful technique to reveal how words function and produce meanings. Within the field of rhetoric, "Methodological inquiry into the cycles or clusters terms and their functions" (Burke 1989: 135) discloses the production of meaning. "Statistical analysis of the correlations" between terms, Kenneth Burke (1974: 30) argues, reveals the equivalences an author establishes between terms shedding light on the "structure of motivation"(p. 20) as those interrelationships between terms produces the meaning of a word and, taken together, orders the relationship between entities a communication. Burke's cluster analysis has been algorithmically implemented in previous research in the study of rhetoric (Butler 2011). Here, word associations are operationalized using tweet-level Pearson's *r* correlations for policy areas using R's QDAP package (Goodrich et al. 2015). They treat the tweet as the unit of analysis and find terms that are associated at a tweet level. Tweets were normalized to lower case, and punctuation was removed. This data cleaning facilitates the identification of significant terminological associations.

Finally, terms for entrepreneurial participation were operationalized as calls for persons to take an active role in a campaign on their own terms. These include calls to volunteer, join, help, or otherwise provide their support for the campaign in some manner as long as they also included invitational rhetoric couching such requests as an invitation to "tell us" or "provide your own" reasons for supporting the campaign. These calls are sufficiently open that they do not define how one is to support, carry out their volunteering, or otherwise participate in the execution of the campaign. The selection of terms follows a similar set of codings used to operationalize campaign calls for entrepreneurial participation via Twitter during the 2010 British general election (Jensen and Anstead 2014).

Findings: U.K. Campaign Use of Twitter to Engage and Empower Supporters

To understand democratization and empowerment of campaign supporters during the election, we look at the patterns of tweeting and retweeting by each of the campaigns.

Table 1. Tweet Patterns for U.K. Parties and Party Leaders.

Twitter Account	Total Posts	*M* Retweets
British National Party	430	12.160
Conservatives	3,349	66.147
David Cameron	192	313.193
Ed Miliband	212	656.679
Leanne Wood	550	48.375
Liberal Democrats	5,711	17.260
Natalie Bennett	1,226	36.018
Nick Clegg	190	111.295
Nicola Sturgeon	402	499.465
Nigel Farage	565	231.327
Plaid Cymru	2,552	24.899
Green Party	1,150	77.585
UK Indepdence Party (UKIP)	1,933	101.697
UK Labour Party	2,175	149.951
Scottish National Party (SNP)	1,771	136.311

These data are reported in Table 1. British political parties tend to produce significantly more tweets than their leaders, the Green Party is a narrow exception. The volume of tweets produced by the Conservatives, Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrats in 2015 individually exceeds the number of tweets these three parties produced combined in 2010 (Jensen and Anstead 2014). Party leaders were retweeted more than the parties themselves with Ed Miliband (656.679) receiving the most retweets on average, Nicola Sturgeon was second with 499.465 average retweets, and David Cameron with 313.193 average retweets came in third.

The distribution of replies, retweets, and invitations to participate are presented in Figure 2. The British National Party has a lower retweet rate than the other parties or party leaders, but they reply more often to other accounts. More than 87 percent of the Conservative's tweets are retweets, but they did not reply to a single tweet. Cameron likewise had no tweet replies, but in contrast to the Conservatives, he had the lowest level of retweeting among party leaders and the parties alike. At the same time, Cameron had the highest percentage of calls for participation (9.90 percent). The Labour party and Ed Miliband had the next highest percentages of tweets inviting persons to participate but replied and retweeted significantly less than most of the other accounts analyzed. The Green Party, as well as Natalie Bennett, its leader, emphasizes retweeting and replying at a higher rate than average, but they emphasize participating on one's own terms considerably less so than Miliband, Cameron, or the Labour party. To determine the overall relationship between these three measures of empowerment, we use Pearson's r correlations between their number of replies, retreats, and calls for entrepreneurial participation. Each of the measures has a statistically significant correlation. Replies and retweets have a Pearson's $r = .950$ ($p = .000$),

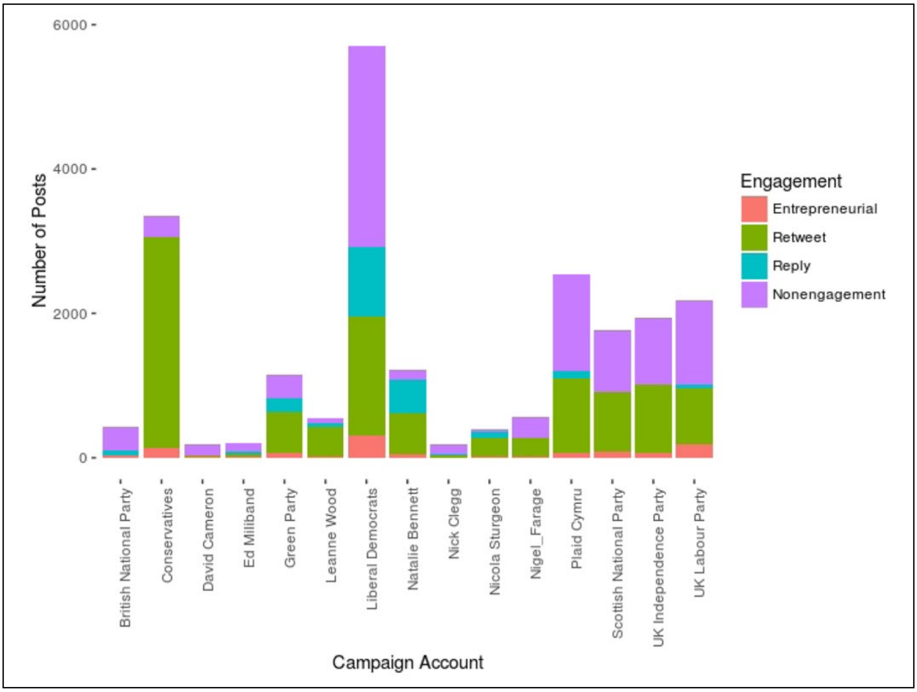

Figure 2. Distribution of campaign tweets.

invitations to participate and retweeting have a Pearson's r = .708 (p = .003), and invitations to participate and replying have a Pearson's r = .733 (p = .002). This suggests that the empowerment of supporters is more likely a strategy than an accident.

Replying and retweeting do not by themselves constitute acts empowerment as empowerment turns on the distribution of power relationships within a context. Media outlets, interest groups, and political authorities already occupy positions of influence. Our concern is therefore with ordinary citizens. There were 2,033 replies sent to 1,080 unique accounts; thirty-three of these accounts were no longer in operation after the election, many on account of having failed to win their seats (e.g., @eddballsmp and @OwenSmith4MP). To determine the extent to which replies empower those being responded to, we analyzed the profiles of the authors replied to by each of the campaigns. Accounts were coded for references to politicians and political parties, interest groups, and bloggers and other media figures. Ed Miliband used the reply function on his own tweets thirty-seven out of forty times as a means of linking tweets together into longer messages. The remaining three replies were to Abby Tomlinson (@twcuddleston), the creator of the #Milifandom meme on Twitter that urged young people to vote Labour. In addition to David Cameron and the Conservatives, the SNP likewise did not reply to a single tweet during the election campaign. The BNP, Nicola Sturgeon, Nigel Farange, Nick Clegg, and UKIP tended to use replies to engage members of the

Table 2. Categories of Accounts Replied to by Parties and Party Leaders.

Twitter Account	Replies Analyzed	Media Replies (% Replies)	Political Officials (% Replies)	Interest Group (% Replies)	Bloggers (% Replies)	Other (% Replies)
British National Party	75	3 (4.00)	21 (28.00)	3 (4.00)	1 (1.33)	47 (62.67)
Conservatives	1	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (100.00)
David Cameron	0	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA
Ed Miliband	40	0 (0.00)	37 (92.50)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (7.50)
Leanne Wood	54	12 (22.22)	8 (14.81)	1 (1.85)	0 (0.00)	33 (61.11)
Liberal Democrats	951	79 (8.31)	173 (18.19)	56 (5.89)	21 (2.21)	622 (65.40)
Natalie Bennett	468	26 (5.56)	46 (9.83)	21 (4.49)	8 (1.71)	367 (78.42)
Nick Clegg	24	8 (33.33)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (4.17)	15 (62.50)
Nicola Sturgeon	89	27 (30.34)	16 (17.98)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	66 (51.69)
Nigel Farage	5	3 (60.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (40.00)
Plaid Cymru	99	0 (0.00)	3 (3.03)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	96 (97.97)
Green Party	175	0 (0.00)	20 (11.43)	3 (1.71)	6 (3.42)	146 (83.43)
UK Independence Party	4	1 (25.00)	3 (75.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
UK Labour Party	43	2 (4.65)	29 (67.44)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.33)	11 (25.58)
Scottish National Party	4	3 (75.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (25.00)	0 (0.00)

media or other politicians and political parties in efforts to shape the debate on Twitter. The BNP in particular targeted the Labour Party and its immigration policy in an effort to drive a wedge between the party traditional Labour voters. In one tweet they proclaim, "BNP is the Labour Party your Grandad voted for!" These results are presented in Table 2.

In general terms, however, the majority of replies for each account were to someone who was neither a member of the media, a blogger, interest group, or another political official. Altogether, 1,272 (63.86 percent) replies were to accounts that did not fall into any of these categories. The majority of replies from the Greens, Natalie Bennett, Plaid Cymru, and the Liberal Democrats, however, were to entities and persons who were neither media representatives nor political officials. Whether a party account or a party leader account, there appears to be no clear trend in the patterns of replies apart from the fact parties tend to reply more than party leaders just as they tend to tweet more, and smaller parties and their leaders tend to reply more than the two largest parties, Labour and the Conservatives.

Retweeting is the third communication operation available to campaigns to empower supporters. There were 10,294 retweets by campaigns. The accounts retweeted were extracted and coded using the same coding categories as the tweet

Table 3. Categories of Accounts Retweeted to by Parties and Party Leaders.

Twitter Account	Retweets Analyzed	Media Replies (% RTs)	Political Officials (% RTs)	Interest Groups (% RTs)	Bloggers (% RTs)	Other (% RTs)
British National Party	4	1 (25.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (75.00)
Conservatives	2,915	80 (16.56)	268 (9.19)	3 (0.10)	5 (0.17)	143 (29.61)
David Cameron	6	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (100.00)
Ed Miliband	19	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	19 (100.00)
Leanne Wood	395	9 (2.20)	12 (3.04)	3 (0.76)	0 (0.00)	371 (93.92)
Liberal Democrats	1,654	101 (6.08)	494 (29.87)	29 (1.75)	7 (0.42)	1,023 (61.85)
Natalie Bennett	533	21 (3.79)	66 (12.38)	10 (1.80)	2 (0.38)	434 (79.55)
NickClegg	16	3 (11.54)	1 (6.25)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	12 (75.00)
Nicola Sturgeon	249	59 (23.69)	57 (22.89)	12 (4.81)	1 (0.40)	120 (48.19)
Nigel Farage	241	10 (4.00)	13 (5.39)	1 (0.40)	5 (2.07)	212 (87.97)
Plaid Cymru	979	32 (3.09)	49 (5.03)	15 (1.53)	1 (0.10)	882 (90.09)
The Green Party	559	22 (3.79)	103 (18.42)	11 (1.97)	2 (0.38)	421 (75.31)
UK Indepdence Partu	924	5 (0.53)	172 (18.61)	7 (0.76)	0 (0.00)	740 (80.09)
UK Labour Party	745	27 (3.47)	203 (27.25)	11 (1.48)	1 (0.13)	503 (67.52)
Scottish National Party	813	135 (16.27)	47 (5.78)	3 (0.37)	9 (1.11)	619 (76.14)

replies. We were able to recover 4,228 unique accounts corresponding to these retweets which were attributable to 9,805 (95.25 percent) of the retweeted tweets. Specific figures on each of the accounts are presented in Table 3. Parties tended to retweet more than party leaders. Of the categories of retweets coded, the majority of retweets were either from media sources or party activists rather than bloggers, other members of parliament (MPs) or candidates, or interest groups.

Although the majority of campaign retweets are originally of accounts from non-empowered spaces, a second attribute of empowerment concerns whether retweeting introduces distinct topics and/or if these topics were handled differently between the campaign-authored tweets and retweets. To determine whether retweets introduced new topics of discourse or and ways of speaking about policies, we compared original campaign tweets with retweets in two ways. First, we examined the list of terms mentioned at least two hundred times each in the corpus of tweets and retweets. Frequently occurring words such as prepositions that add little semantic meaning, "stopwords," were removed from the data. The full list of terms can be found in Online Appendix B. Among the original tweets, only fourteen of the ninety words repeated more than two hundred times are different from the words appearing among the retweets. Likewise, only fourteen of the eighty-four words repeated more than two hundred times in the retweets are unique to the retweets.

Second, we analyze whether these terms are in similar ways using association rules to identify other words that are statistically associated with words overlapping between the retweets and original tweets. A Pearson's r correlation coefficient of .20 or greater was selected as it provided a significant distribution of terms in both the tweet and retweet corpora across most accounts where these policy terms were mentioned. We

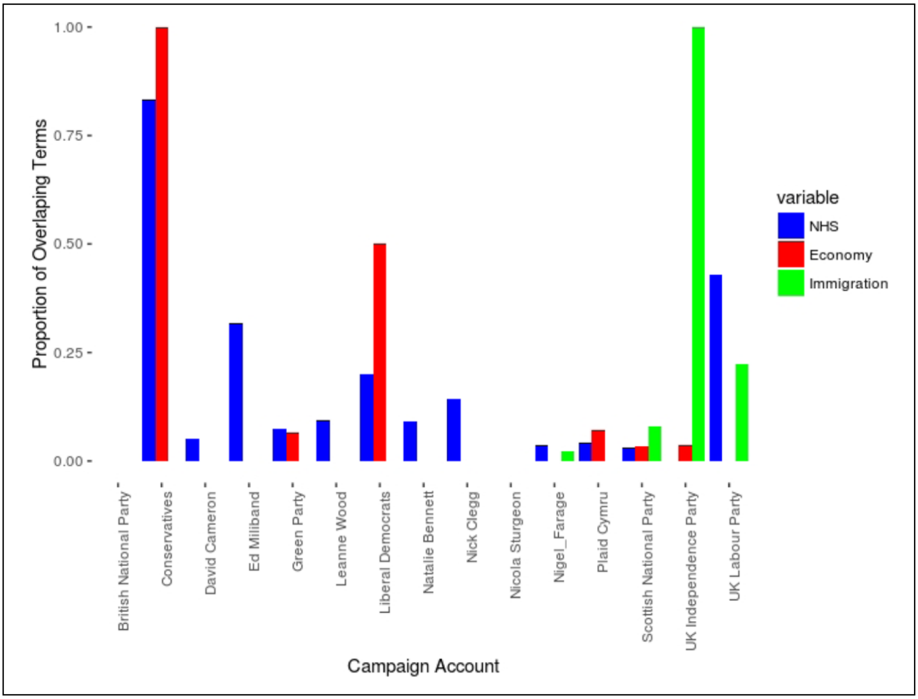

Figure 3. Proportion of overlapping policy terms between campaign tweets and retweets.
Note. NHS = National Health Service.

segmented the data by campaign account, examining the number of words correlated with each policy area that overlaps between the retweets and the original tweets. The proportion of overlapping terms for each policy area ranges from zero to one where zero indicates no overlapping terms and one means that all the terms correlated with the policy area present in the retweets are also present among the terms in the original campaign tweets. While the Conservative party tweeted extensively about the NHS and the economy, they had no original tweets about immigration. Neither did David Cameron, Nicola Sturgeon, Leanne Wood, Nigel Farage, nor Nick Clegg. Similarly, Nicola Sturgeon had no original tweets about the NHS, and Leanne Wood had no original tweets about the economy. Hence, these constitute missing cases in this calculation as the denominator in the calculation of the proportion of overlapping tweets is zero. Figure 3 displays the degree of overlap in correlated terms across each of the campaign accounts.

The British National Party had only four retweets, none mentioning any of the three policy terms. Party leaders had zero overlapping terms between their tweets and retweets mentioning the word, "economy." This is largely explained by the relative reticence of party leaders to use this word in any of their tweets. David Cameron used the term "economy" in eighteen of his original tweets but zero of his retweets. Similarly, Nick Clegg used this term in ten of his own tweets but in zero of his retweets.

Ed Miliband mentioned this word once in his original tweets but zero times in his retweets. Natalie Bennett used the term most in retweets, four times, and four additional times in her original tweets, but there were no overlapping terms between the two categories of tweets. Nigel Farage mentioned "economy" in two of his retweets but none of his original tweets. And Leanne Wood and Nicola Sturgeon did not mention "economy" in any of their tweets or retweets. Immigration was another issue party leaders tended to avoid with Cameron, Clegg, Sturgeon, and Wood skipping the topic entirely and Miliband mentioning it in only two of his tweets. Farage was the only exception as he had twenty-five tweets and retweets combined on this issue. The NHS generated the most tweeting by either parties or their leaders with only Nicola Sturgeon producing zero original tweets but five retweets mentioning the NHS.

These data show areas where each of the campaigns maintained tighter or looser message control. The Conservatives made the economy a key issue in the campaign, and their messaging about the economy used the same terms in both their tweets and retweets. Both the tweets and retweets referred to the creation of a "strong" and "stable" economy. Similarly, UKIP maintained tight control on its immigration messaging that emphasized terms such as a need to "control" and "reduce" immigration against a status quo that has "high" and "uncontrolled" levels of immigration. The remaining accounts had less than a 50 percent overlap between tweet and retweet terms signifying they constrained their messaging to a lesser extent and included greater levels of terminological hybridity through their retweets.

Conclusion: Selective Empowerment and Engagement at the Margins

This paper developed a way to conceptualize and operationalize the structure of political relationships operating within political communication flows on Twitter. These data from the 2015 U.K. general election generally find little evidence of the involvement of social media communications in empowering campaign supporters. Although social media may be used extensively for participation and various forms of activism during the course of the election campaign, calls for entrepreneurial participation are limited and the empowerment of citizens selective. This conclusion stems from the limited evidence of entrepreneurial calls for participation and the varying degrees to which retweets and replies were used to empower supporters.

Campaign replies generally are directed at ordinary citizens, though replies comprise a small minority of the overall tweets from a campaign. Retweeting likewise empowers predominantly communications from laypersons; however, on key policy issues, campaigns select tweets using the same policy terms as their own tweets. These trends are most pronounced for the major parties, particularly Labour and the Conservatives, and leaders of the main parties tend to use social media primarily as a means to develop their identities. However, there is evidence that minor parties exercise tight message control over their favored issues. Innovation is happening but it is best characterized as *selective empowerment* and most evident among the minor parties and their leaders.

The results here do not significantly challenge the broad empirical findings based on recent American campaigns which hold that a campaign ultimately retain control over campaign messaging, strategies, and policies (Chadwick 2013; Kreiss 2012; Stromer-Galley 2014). However, this research differs from that line of work in two respects. First, it identifies spaces of empowerment along the margins of the campaign where campaigns do engage ordinary citizens' concerns, encourage them to participate on their own terms, and use their terminologies to sell the campaign. Minor parties and their leaders primarily used replies and retweets to amplify the voices of people who are not otherwise empowered. These spaces would be missed if campaign power structures were inferred at a high level of abstraction from the input of interests and decisional outputs. Second, these findings point to simultaneous structures of control as well as empowerment. Campaigns retweeted and replied primarily to persons otherwise not empowered and in so doing, likely calculate they were advantaged. Empowering citizens and advancing the aims of the campaign need not be mutually exclusive. And we might find more evidence of these forms of empowerment happening during the primaries in the United States as these campaign organizations often depend on volunteers to a larger extent than campaigns in the United Kingdom.

Despite the limited empirical embrace of empowerment for ordinary citizens within U.K. political campaigns, these metrics for measuring empowerment are useful for understanding the operation of power in campaign communications. The correlation between each of the measures of empowerment is suggestive that they form empirically a single dimension with which to evaluate campaign communication practices. These measures point to differences in the manner in which various parties and party leaders choose to engage the members of the British public. Over time, we may also find changes in campaign practices of empowerment. Campaigns have been historically hierarchical and campaign communications a monologue rather than a dialogue (Michels 1966). Within social media, those practices collide with the interactive and horizontal communication architecture. Although parties and their networks of campaign professions regularly reevaluate their strategies, attempting to learn from both success and failure (Kreiss 2016a), major parties and their leaders, that history, so far, appears to structure the manner in which social media like Twitter are used today.

The growth of social media represents new challenges and opportunities for political parties. Formal membership organizations are no longer required as an organizational basis for persons and crowds to reach a wider public. The emergence of alternative spaces of political organization outside parties and the declining capacity and willingness for parties to involve supporters led Mair (2013, 1) to conclude, "The age of party democracy has passed" as parties have become increasingly reliant on professionals, emptying parties of their popular content. At the same time, social media may facilitate the formation of more connective parties. As the creation of new parties out of the 15M movement in Spain attests, the growth of social media use, and the rapid large-scale political mobilization it enables, means laypersons no longer require a politician to speak on their behalf (Tormey, 2015). To combat the level of political alienation we have seen in many advanced industrial democracies, these technologies may be able to bring ordinary citizens into a party in ways that decisively affect its politics, strategies, and tactics. In differing degrees, political parties may serve as a vehicle for laypersons to carry out various political projects rather than only or even primarily represent a constituency.

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Intersectionality and Press Coverage of Political Campaigns: Representations of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Female Candidates at the U.K. 2010 General Election

Orlanda Ward[1]

Abstract

Internationally, scholars have raised substantial concerns regarding unfavorable news coverage of female political candidates and representatives. However, prior research has scarcely considered the intersectional effects of political actors' race and gender in this context. I investigate these dynamics through a case study of the U.K. 2010 general election, a breakthrough year for black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) women in British politics. Only three had previously been elected to parliament but a further seven joined their ranks that year. While headlines celebrated the possibility of a "small revolution" resulting in "the most diverse parliament ever," the press also subjected BAME female candidates to exceptional scrutiny regarding their credentials and ability to "transform politics." Employing a quantitative content analysis of national newspaper coverage, I find that the apparent newsworthiness of BAME women's intersectional identity was a double-edged sword. While they arguably enjoyed a visibility advantage compared with white female candidates, their coverage was also exceptionally negative and narrowly focused on their ethnicity and gender. I argue that as national legislatures become increasingly diverse, single axis analyses of the effects of politicians' race, gender, or other axes of identity are insufficient to capture their combined effects on press coverage of politics.

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Introduction and Political Context

Prior to 2010, only three black women had been elected to the British House of Commons; all from the Labour Party. The 2010 general election saw a breakthrough, as seven new black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) women joined their ranks, including two Conservatives as well as the first Asian and Muslim women elected to parliament. Both the new Conservative members of parliament (MPs), Helen Grant and Priti Patel, had been members of David Cameron's "A-List" or "Priority List." Despite causing considerable tensions within the party, candidate diversification was a key part of the Conservatives' 2010 election strategy (Hill 2013). However, press responses were mixed at best. In accordance with the hopes of political parties, BAME female candidates were often celebrated as signs of modernization and political progress. Yet, references to "Cameron's Cuties" and "Dave's Dolls" also formed new iterations of the 1997 moniker, "Blair's Babes," arguably undermining the perceived legitimacy of the new intake. BAME Labour women were meanwhile subject to particularly intense scrutiny from right-leaning newspapers, frequently framed as exemplary of the party's worst "left wing" excesses.

A substantial body of international findings shows that gendered patterns of press scrutiny are disadvantageous to women in politics (for a review, see Campus 2013). The United Kingdom is no exception: Female MPs have long expressed concern regarding gendered media bias against them (Childs 2004; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996), and national newspaper coverage of the 2010 election persisted in treating women unfavorably (Campbell and Childs 2010; Harmer and Wring 2013; Mavin et al. 2010; Ross et al. 2013). Since then, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Women in Parliament has put forward recommendations for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee and Independent Press Standards Organisation to review sexism in coverage of parliamentarians.[1] Yet, while the APPG and studies cited above focused on gendered aspects of election coverage, no British scholarship and very few scholars internationally have investigated the intersectional effects of "race"[2] and gender on the mediation of political campaigns.

The metaphor of intersection, as formulated by Crenshaw (1989, 1991), Hill Collins (1990), and King (1988), among others, is used to describe the ways in which identity categories such as race and gender are both mutually constituted and mutually constitutive. This is evidenced by the emergent intersectional turn in gender and politics scholarship, which has begun to document the multiplicity of ways in which patterns of political recruitment, descriptive representation, and leadership vary *among* women as well as between women and men (inter alia, Bratton et al. 2006; Brown 2014; Celis et al. 2014; Darcy et al. 1993; Durose et al. 2016; Evans 2015; Nugent and Krook 2015; Philpot and Walton 2007; Showunmi et al. 2015; Smooth 2008).

This article employs an intersectional framework to analyze the combined effects of race and gender on the quantity, quality, and content of coverage received by

Table 1. Descriptive Representation in House of Commons by Intersectional Identity.

Year	2005		2010		2015	
Group	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
White male	509	78.3	489	75.2	438	67.4
White female	126	19.4	134	20.6	171	26.3
BAME male	13	2	16	2.5	21	3.2
BAME female	2	0.3	11	1.7	20	3.1

Source. Audickas et al. (2016); Keen & Cracknell (2016), own calculations.
Note. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.

political candidates of varying identities. Taking the U.K. 2010 general election as a case study, I find that "racial" or "gendered" patterns previously identified in coverage of predominantly white women and minority men do not provide a fully accurate description of press treatment of BAME female candidates. Indeed, by subsuming minority women within the categories of "minorities" or "women," single axis studies risk obscuring the experiences of the most marginalized and underrepresented within these groups.

This has implications for considerations of the effects of candidate identity on press coverage more widely. Historically, the absence of intersectional analyses has partially resulted from a small-*n* problem. However, recent elections have resulted in notable improvements in the descriptive representation of minority ethnic women across many national legislatures.[3] Although BAME women remain underrepresented in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (Evans, 2015; Hughes 2013b)[4]—comprising 3.2 percent of Commons Members despite making up 6.6 percent of the population (2011 Census)—they went on to more than double their numbers in the 2015 election (see Table 1). Furthermore, rising numbers of British BAME female parliamentary candidates and their deployment to publicly embody the modernization of political parties appear to be reflective of wider cross-national trends. In the United States, for example, the first black female Republican was elected in 2014 (Mia Love, Utah 4th District) and garnered international media attention following her invitation to address the Republican National Convention in 2012. Thus, as political parties on the Left and Right seek both to "diversify" the race and gender of their candidates, and to be seen to do so, it is imperative that scholars address the simultaneous and combined effects of these multiple axes of identity on news media responses.

Race, Gender, and British Election Coverage

This article investigates effects of British parliamentary candidates' race and gender on four key aspects of the campaign coverage they receive: its quantity, overall tone, and the degree to which it highlights female candidates' gender and BAME candidates' race. While existing intersectional analyses provide important methodological precedents, they are extremely scarce (Gershon 2012; Tolley 2015). In addition, the relevant single axis literature is somewhat asymmetric. International scholarship is far more extensive regarding the effects of gender than race. The latter is rarely considered outside the United States, and there has been no prior scholarship on the effects of candidate race on British election coverage.[5]

Quantity of Coverage

Findings from the United Kingdom and elsewhere indicate a consistent gender gap in politicians' visibility both during and between elections (Adcock 2010; Banwart et al. 2003; Braden 1996; Campbell and Childs 2010; Gidengil and Everitt 2003; Heldman et al. 2005; Kahn 1994; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; O'Neill et al. 2016; Ross 2002). Ross et al. (2013) found that only 29 percent of national newspaper articles covering the British 2010 general election mentioned one or more females. However, the authors also note women comprised just 21 percent of all candidates, and, therefore, their relative invisibility in campaign news is at least partly attributable to their absence in the political arena more widely. This highlights the necessity of accounting for the effects of contextual factors on campaign coverage if we are to assert that gendered and/or racial differences do, indeed, result from differential treatment by the press.

I address this by building on the work of a groundbreaking intersectional study of local newspaper coverage of U.S. House representatives running for reelection in 2006. Gershon (2012) has found that when the combined effects of race and gender are considered, and campaign, media, and candidate factors are controlled for, significant cleavages emerge among minority ethnic and white women. While white women received similar levels of coverage to white males (contrary to the findings of many single axis studies), minority ethnic women appeared less frequently than candidates from all other groups. These results also challenge the findings of U.S. race and politics scholarship, which indicate that (predominantly male) African-American candidates tend to receive equal or greater levels of local coverage than their white counterparts (Barber and Gandy 1990; Graber 1984; Sylvie 1995; Terkildsen and Damore 1999; Zilber and Niven 2000).

I anticipate that intersectional differences will also be observed in U.K. national coverage, but that BAME women will receive *more* coverage than similar candidates from all other intersectional groups. This is because of the differences in the dynamics of garnering U.S. local and U.K. national coverage. U.S. local coverage represents a contest between (usually two) candidates; but in national coverage, the entire pool of candidates competes for attention. Although party leaders obviously dominate this coverage, when we contrast BAME women with *comparable* counterparts, the double novelty and, therefore, newsworthiness of their intersectional identities is likely to result in a visibility advantage in this context.

Hypothesis 1: BAME women will receive more coverage than comparable candidates from all other intersectional groups.

Tone of Coverage

Several studies have noted the disproportionately negative tone of media representations of the 1997 intake of New Labour women MPs (Childs 2004; Ward 2000). More recently, Ross et al. (2013: 15) note examples of coverage in the run-up to the 2010 U.K. general election in which, even when female candidates were praised for their political aptitude, they were simultaneously undermined by commentary on their appearance. Furthermore, it has been suggested that opponents occasionally make tactical use of gendered media bias as a tool against women (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996). Similarly, in the United States, African-American candidates are dogged by more negative coverage than their white counterparts (Jeffries 2002; McIlwain and Caliendo 2009).

Theorizing the reasons for such differences, Puwar (2004: 72–73) argues that women and minorities in the public sphere are "hypervisible" and subject to "super surveillance" due to a "reluctance to bestow authority on specific types of racialised and gendered bodies." Similarly, Niven (2004: 642) attributes the disproportionately negative coverage afforded to white female and African-American male members of Congress to a distribution effect, in which their conspicuousness means they are evaluated more harshly than white males. Considering the intersectional effects of these dynamics, Gershon's (2012) study of coverage of House representatives finds that minority women receive more negative coverage not just compared with white men, but also minority ethnic men and white women.

I expect to observe a similar process in which BAME women are subject to particularly intense scrutiny, othered as a result of both their racial and gendered identity, and, therefore, covered less positively compared with candidates from all other intersectional groups.

> **Hypothesis 2:** Coverage of BAME women will be less likely to be positive than that of comparable candidates from other groups.

Highlighting Candidate Identity

The presence of news frames that highlight female politicians' gender has been well documented internationally (inter alia, Campbell and Childs 2010; Campus 2013; Falk 2013; Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012; Heldman et al. 2005; Ross et al. 2013; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996). However, there is some debate around the effects of such frames. Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross (1996) suggest that the foregrounding of women's gender is associated with increased frequency of coverage, whereas Falk (2008: 37) argues that despite this association, the frame's emphasis is on the "notion of women as out of place and unnatural in the political sphere." This is exemplified by responses to the 1997 intake of female New Labour MPs: The press "demanded within months that they justify Tony Blair's boast that they would 'transform the culture of politics'" (Ward 2000: 25). At the 2010 general election, the explicit gender frame continued to highlight women's difference, ensuring "that the role of politician continues to be codified as male" (Ross et al. 2013: 7). Similarly, in the United States, explicit references to the race of minority ethnic candidates pervade their coverage (Caliendo and McIlwain 2006; e.g., Clay 1992; Denis Wu and Lee 2005; Larson 2006; Niven and Zilber 1996; Reeves 1997). Meanwhile, the racial-gendered identities of white men running for office are unquestioned.

We know very little of the effects of media framing and/or candidate identity on electoral outcomes in the United Kingdom, but there is evidence to that for BAME candidates, Muslims, in particular, suffer a racial penalty in vote capture (Fisher et al. 2011), and polling suggests that a third of the British electorate remains uncomfortable with the idea of a minority ethnic prime minister.[6] Therefore, while frames lauding the increasing diversity of the Commons may ostensibly be positive in tone, their effects may be equivocal for BAME and/or female candidates who seek visibility, but may also be incentivized to downplay their identity within their prospective constituencies. Furthermore, Tolley (2015: 97) has noted that in Canadian print news coverage of elected officials, simultaneously racialized and gendered news frames depicting visible minority female representatives rely on "mythologies about 'good' and 'bad' minorities[. . .], as well as an attendant inclination to focus on mistakes while minimizing successes." Tolley (2015: 97) argues that this coverage may have a deeper impact on minority women than other candidates because "it exists in combination with, and may even confirm, stereotypes about both their race and their gender."

Single axis quantitative studies usually posit white males as the baseline to which other groups are compared. To explore intersectional patterns of novelty frames, I compare the likelihood that articles mention gender in coverage of BAME and white female candidates, and the likelihood that articles mention race among female and male BAME candidates. I expect to observe a multiplicative process in which BAME women's race and gender are perceived as exceptionally salient and are, therefore, most likely to be highlighted in coverage of their campaigns. For example, many of the BAME women elected in 2010 attracted attention due to their status as *intersectional* firsts—not only women, but also Muslim, Asian, and/or Conservative. Therefore, my final hypotheses state,

> **Hypothesis 3:** Coverage of BAME women will be more likely to highlight candidate gender than that of comparable white women.
> **Hypothesis 4:** Coverage of BAME women will be more likely to highlight candidate race than that of comparable BAME men.

Method and Data

Candidate and Text Sampling

Building on Gershon's (2012) design, candidates are sampled from four groups: BAME women and men, and white women and men. Because of variation

Table 2. Candidate Characteristics by Intersectional Identity.

Variable	White Male		White Female		BAME Male		BAME Female		Total	
Conservative (*N*/%)	233	49.1	51	28.7	12	42.9	2	13.3	298	42.8
Liberal Democrat (*N*/%)	52	11.0	16	9.0	3	10.7	1	6.7	72	10.3
Labour (*N*/%)	190	40.0	111	62.4	13	46.4	12	80.0	326	46.8
Incumbent (*N*/%)	265	55.8	69	38.8	10	35.7	2	13.3	346	49.7
Incumbent competitiveness: (*M*/*SD*)	2.4	1.5	2.6	1.6	2.3	1.4	1.5	0.7	2.4	1.5
Challenger competitiveness (*M*/*SD*)	3.5	1.4	3.7	1.5	3.1	1.7	2.8	1.9	3.5	1.5

Note. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.

in candidate and campaign characteristics across intersectional groups, a detailed matching strategy is employed. By matching similar candidates and controlling for contextual factors, I aim to infer that the differences in coverage that are observed are the result of intersectional identity rather than characteristics such as partisanship or incumbency.

The sample includes both challengers and incumbents, but challengers with low chances of success are excluded from the frame due to the likelihood that they will receive very little or no national newspaper coverage. Viable candidates are defined as (1) incumbents, (2) challengers who were successfully elected, and (3) candidates who placed second in "ultra marginal" or "very marginal" seats.[7] Party leaders, frontbenchers, and Select Committee chairs are also excluded given that they receive exceptionally high levels of coverage, and there were few women and/or minorities among their ranks in 2010.

Of the remaining 696 viable Conservative, Liberal Democrat, and Labour candidates, 475 were white men, 178 were white women, 28 were BAME men, and just 15 were BAME women. The figures in Table 2 show that, in addition to substantial differences in the numbers of candidates from each group, they also varied in terms of several politically relevant characteristics likely to affect the quantity, quality, and content of campaign coverage they would receive. First, due to the historical lack of BAME female MPs, BAME women were far less likely to be incumbents: just 13 percent of viable BAME women compared with 35 percent of BAME men, 39 percent of white women, and 56 percent of white men. Second, BAME women were more likely to represent Labour: 80 percent of BAME women compared with 46 percent of BAME men, 63 percent of white women, and just 40 percent of white men. Viable BAME women also tended to be selected in either ultra safe or ultra marginal constituencies, and were more likely to stand in London or the North West than candidates from other groups.

To control for these differences, each of the population of 15 BAME women was paired with two white men, two white women, and one BAME man (the overall number of BAME men was too low to provide multiple matches). Therefore, coverage of a total of 90 candidates was analyzed. BAME male and white female and male individuals were exactly matched on party, incumbency, and race competitiveness in 52 of 75 cases, and competitiveness was either relaxed to within one degree or party was not matched for those remaining. The majority of cases were also matched on region, and seniority (year elected) was closely matched among incumbents. The full list of candidates is provided in the appendix.

Each of the candidates' campaign coverage was captured from the Nexis data base, using the terms "first name" AND "last name," searching articles from all twenty-one national newspapers (including daily and weekend editions), therefore, spanning the broadest possible range of editorial lines. Newspapers were selected due to their continued ability to reach immense audiences in digital form despite the long-term decline in print circulation, as well as their more opinionated and partisan election coverage compared with highly regulated television news broadcasts. In addition, newspapers devote attention to a comparatively broad range of candidates, while time constraints confine television news closely to the activities of party leaders (Scammell and Semetko 2008: 83). The timeline for the sample is between the dissolution of parliament and official start of the campaign on April 12, 2010 and one week following the date of election, May 13, 2010. This allows for consideration of the full campaign as well as postelection responses to intersectional firsts and coverage of the coalition negotiations that followed the 2010 result. A total of 488 articles was analyzed and includes news reports and opinion columns. Published letters to the editor were also included given that, although they may not be representative of the publication's editorial line, the analysis focuses on the content of outputs rather than editorial intent.

Coding Scheme and Explanatory Models

A quantitative content analysis was performed to capture the quantity, tone, and content of coverage of each of the sampled candidates. These coverage outcomes are then the dependent variables in a series of explanatory models estimating the intersectional effects of candidate identity, controlling for additional factors. For all models, BAME women are the baseline category, placing them at the center of the analysis and allowing for comparisons with all other intersectional groups.

The *quantity* of coverage is measured as the number of times a candidate's name is mentioned within the time frame. The number of articles mentioning each candidate is an alternative measure, but name mentions capture a greater degree of variation because articles may include only fleeting mention or discuss a candidate in detail. The dependent variable is a count, and, therefore, a negative binominal regression is used. The unit of analysis is the candidate.

The overall *tone* of each article is measured on a three-point negative to positive scale. For example, a profile of Rushanara Ali describing her as "politically rated, beautiful, [and] eloquent" (Taylor 2010) is coded as "positive," while an a article entitled "MPs are in no position to sneer at anyone, Diane" (Ellen 2010), describing Diane Abbott as "sneering, sighing, rolling her eyes, interrupting, and exhibiting condescending boorishness," is coded as negative.[8] Where an article is read as neutral, or where positive and negative references within it are read as equal, the article is coded as "neutral/balanced." As the variable for tone is measured on an ordinal scale, the model is estimated using an ordered probit regression. In this and subsequent models, the article is the unit of analysis and standard errors are clustered by candidate, given correlation in aspects of coverage candidates receive at the individual level.

References that *explicitly highlight candidate gender or race* are coded as two binary variables. Indicators include mentions of the gender, ethnicity, skin color, parentage, or heritage of the candidate, their supporters, or constituents. I do not attempt to capture the latent references such as mentions of spouses, or references to maleness or whiteness. Therefore, comparisons are made between coverage of BAME and white women, and between BAME women and men. The models are estimated using probit regressions.

Controls

Control variables relate to the candidate and campaign factors, drawing on Gershon's (2012) design. While variation in candidate attributes and, therefore, sample bias are addressed by the matching strategy, the following independent variables address variation within, as well as between, groups.

Challengers tend to receive less coverage than incumbents (Schaffner 2006), and research into the visibility of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) suggests that long-standing incumbents receive more coverage than less-established peers (Gattermann and Vasilopoulou 2015). Therefore, *seniority* is measured as the number of previous terms served: 0 for challengers, +1 for each previous term.

Given the continued partisan nature of the British press (Brandenburg 2006), *party affiliation* is also likely to affect the quality, quantity, and content of coverage. In addition, the foregrounding of race and gender may be more likely for non-Labour BAME women due to their scarcity. Conservatives are the baseline category to which Liberal Democrat and Labour candidates are compared.

U.S. findings indicate that the greater the competitiveness of a campaign, the greater the expected frequency of coverage, and the more negative the expected tone of coverage (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Vinson 2003, both cited in Gershon 2012). *Marginal seats* are measured as a binary variable, with ultra safe, very safe, and fairly safe constituencies as the baseline category to which fairly marginal and ultra marginal seats are compared.

Results

Quantity of Coverage

The first hypothesis states that BAME women will receive more coverage than all other groups. With BAME women as the baseline category, only the coefficient for white women is significant (see Table 3). Therefore, although the results do not fully support the hypothesis, they do point to an important intersectional difference among

Table 3. Negative Binomial Regression: Total Name Mentions.

Characteristics	Coefficient (*SE*)	Minimum–Maximum
White male	−0.67	−4.32
	−0.51	
White female	−0.86**	−5.09
	−0.43	
BAME male	−0.01	−0.07
	−0.43	
Liberal Democrat	−0.38	−0.91
	−0.83	
Labour	0.86**	3.94
	−0.34	
Status/seniority	0.22	1.18
	−0.18	
Marginal seat	−1.04***	−5.50
	−0.34	
Constant	1.89***	
	−0.34	
Observations	90	
χ^2 test	37.47	
p	.000	

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.
*$p < .1$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

women. Coefficients are reported in addition to marginal change in the dependent variable given a fixed change in the independent variable from its minimum to its maximum value, holding all other variables constant at their means. This provides a comparison of the average difference in the number of name mentions for each group. The marginal effects indicate that white female candidates received only four name mentions on average, less than half the coverage BAME women received, whose names were mentioned nine times on average, holding all other variables constant. Thus, the double novelty of race and gender in the context of the 2010 general election appears to have resulted in something of a visibility advantage for BAME women over comparable white female counterparts.

It is important, however, not to understate the substantial variation observed *within* groups. For example, four unsuccessful BAME female challengers received no coverage at all, as well as Lisa Nandy who won Wigan and became one of the first female MPs of mixed Asian heritage. At the other end of the spectrum, Diane Abbott received the most coverage among BAME women, with thirty-eight name mentions. Abbott's position as an outlier is to be expected given her incumbent position as the first black woman elected to the Commons, as well as her media work.[9] However, two somewhat less predictable factors also contributed to her visibility. First, a Twitter scandal in which Labour hopeful Stuart MacLennan was deselected after tweeting a series of insults about Abbott and other colleagues, and second, an independent challenge in her constituency from well-known newspaper columnist Suzanne Moore. Similarly to Abbott, the most prominent members of other intersectional groups also received coverage as a result of external factors. Sadiq Khan, Kate Hoey, and Tristram Hunt all received far more name mentions than other BAME men, white women, and white men (58, 30, and 127, respectively). This was primarily due to Kahn's position as a junior transport minister, backbencher Hoey's comments on coalition-building, and Hunt's minor celebrity status as a broadcast journalist. Therefore, while the results show a significant intersectional difference in coverage of BAME and white women, they also highlight the importance of contextual factors determining candidate visibility.

Coverage of other BAME women, particularly challengers, tended to be far less varied. Abbott was followed by Rushanara Ali and Shabana Mahmood, framed exclusively as "first Muslim women," and fellow Labour incumbent Dawn Butler, who featured in stories about women and minorities in general, the state of the Labour party, and her competitive race with Sarah Teather. Also prominent were Conservative firsts, Helen Grant and Priti Patel, who featured almost exclusively in articles primarily concerned with women, minorities, and the diversification of the Conservative Party. So, although there was wide variation in the visibility of individual BAME women, their intersectional novelty does appear to have been the driving force for the increased coverage that they received.

Tone of Coverage

The second hypothesis states that coverage of BAME women will be less likely to be positive than that of all other groups. The positive and significant coefficients for white women and men in Table 4 show that coverage of both groups was more positive on average than that of BAME female candidates, holding all other variables constant. However, the nonsignificant coefficient for BAME men indicates that contrary to the hypothesis, there were no significant differences in the tone of coverage of BAME women and men. It could be suggested, therefore, that no intersectional effect is observed here, but, instead, a single axis racial bias resulting in more negative coverage for BAME than white candidates, regardless of gender. However, it is important to note that although differences were not statistically significant, BAME men were also less likely to receive negative coverage and more likely to receive positive coverage than BAME women.

The predicted probabilities for each point on the tone scale in Table 5 indicate that, controlling for other factors, coverage of BAME women was twice as likely to be negative as that of white women: Ten of every hundred articles are predicted to be explicitly negative compared with just five. Similarly, coverage of BAME women is almost half as likely to be positive as that of white women at just eight of every hundred articles compared with fourteen. This is especially troubling in the context of BAME women's visibility: More coverage may not be an advantage if that coverage is also more likely to be critical.

Table 4. Ordered Probit Regression: Overall Tone of Coverage.

Characteristic	Coefficient (*SE*)
White male	0.29*
	(0.16)
White female	0.34*
	(0.19)
BAME male	0.21
	(0.18)
Liberal Democrat	−0.76**
	(0.36)
Labour	0.09
	(0.29)
Status/seniority	0.01
	(0.05)
Marginal seat	0.72***
	(0.22)
Constant cut 1	−1.09***
	(0.24)
Constant cut 2	1.62***
	(0.27)
Observations	488
χ^2 test	21.55
p	.003

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.
*p < .1. **p < .05. ***p < .01.

Table 5. Predicted Probabilities for Tone of Coverage by Intersectional Identity.

Group	Negative	Neutral/Mixed	Positive
White male	0.06	0.81	0.13
White female	0.05	0.81	0.14
BAME male	0.06	0.82	0.11
BAME female	0.10	0.82	0.08

Note. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.

While these findings suggest that BAME women may face systemic disadvantages in terms of the overall tone of coverage they capture, they must be interpreted with caution. First, the vast majority of articles were coded as neutral/balanced. Second, Labour incumbents Dawn Butler and Helen Grant were especially likely to receive negative coverage, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the articles in which they appeared. Both were accused of taking their constituencies for granted (Bates 2010; Moore 2010) and criticized in terms of their character: Abbott as a "left wing firebrand" (O'Flynn 2010), representative of an "unprogressive, tribal and sectarian" (Toynbee 2010) Labour Party, and Grant as

Table 6. Probit Regressions: Likelihood of Explicit References to Candidate Identity.

	Gender		Race
Characteristics	Coefficient (*SE*)		Coefficient (*SE*)
White female	−1.19***	BAME male	−0.76**
	(0.25)		(0.37)
Labour[a]	−0.36		−0.77*
	(0.26)		(0.41)
Status/seniority	−0.26***		−0.23***
	(0.08)		(0.09)
Marginal seat	−0.41		0.26
	(0.25)		(0.36)
Constant	0.56***		0.88***
	(0.20)		(0.30)
Observations	228		217
χ^2 test	39.59		25.83
p	.000		.000

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.
a. Liberal Democrat is excluded as a category in these models because it perfectly predicts outcomes for both dependent variables.
$^{*}p < .1$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

"patronizing" (Bates 2010), compared with her "saintly" (Price and Curle 2010) opponent. If Abbott's coverage is removed from the model, the coefficients for white women and men become nonsignificant, and if Grant's coverage is removed, only the positive coefficient for white men remains significant. It is unsurprising that visibility leads to enhanced scrutiny and, therefore, some of the most prominent BAME female candidates also received the most negative coverage. However, although Abbott and Grant's coverage skews the overall tone of coverage down for all BAME women within the model, it is arguable that it also does so in real terms. This is because, as indicated by the results below, in addition to being highly critical, coverage rendered the racial and gendered identities of BAME women highly salient. Therefore, individuals are frequently characterized as representatives of BAME female politicians as a group. Furthermore, high circulating and mid-market publications were far less likely to portray BAME women positively than broadsheets with smaller readerships. Not a single article from the mid-market press (*Mail*, *Express*, and Sunday editions) described a BAME female candidate in terms that were more positive than negative, and only two tabloid articles did so (both published in the *Mirror*).[10]

Explicit Highlighting of Candidate Identity

Stark intersectional differences emerge regarding the likelihood of coverage that explicitly highlights the gender or race of female and/or BAME candidates. The results shown in Table 6 strongly support the hypothesis that explicit foregrounding of gender would be more likely in coverage of BAME than white women: BAME women are explicitly gendered in forty-four of every 100 articles on average, compared with just nine for white women, holding other factors constant. Descriptively, 45 percent of BAME women's coverage mentioned their gender, compared with 11 percent of white women's. Similarly, the predicted probability of race being highlighted in articles featuring BAME men is high at .25, but far greater at .54 for BAME women. Descriptively, the comparison was 31 percent to 50 percent, respectively.

Much of the explicit gendering of BAME women during the campaign resulted from ostensibly positive intersectional first frames: "first Muslim women"; "first Asian woman"; "first minority ethnic Conservative woman." These frames, which posit "diversification" as a proxy for modernization, reflect the interests of political parties keen to generate broad appeal. However, images of the new cohort as signs of progress, bringing with them the promise of substantive representation and increased engagement in politics among underrepresented groups, are problematic. The extensive focus on BAME women's racial and gendered identities was sometimes in direct contrast to candidates' own self-presentations and campaign strategies. For example, while one commentator noted, referring to Rushanara Ali, that it would be "powerfully symbolic to have a female Bangladeshi in parliament" (Brooks 2010), Ali herself argued, "As a Bengali and as an east ender, I take my courage from the confidence that the community gives me—people from different backgrounds, men, women, white, Bangladeshi, Somali—to rise above [. . .] divisive politics" (Brooks 2010). Discussion of BAME female challengers' collective historic gains that went beyond the "first" moniker was typically positive. However, this was usually couched in terms of gender *or* ethnic diversity, and rarely made reference to BAME women as a specific group. Furthermore, individual profiles of BAME women often raised questions regarding their competency and legitimacy as candidates, particularly when their identity was explicitly foregrounded. The excitement surrounding BAME women as intersectional firsts was also countered by the pervasive frame of co-option, particularly for Conservative women who it was asserted had been "parachuted," "ushered front and centre," "promoted," "selected," "handpicked," and "fast-tracked" into particular seats. In contrast, reference to the historical underrepresentation of women and minorities, and long-standing work to remedy this by organizations both within and beyond political parties (for example, Women2Win, Labour Women's Network, Emily's List, 50:50 Coalition, Operation Black Vote) was notably absent across publications of all political allegiances. It was, instead, claimed that diverse Conservative parliamentary candidates had been "chosen for the wrong reason: to carry David Cameron's message that the Tories have changed. Not changed their principles, but their appearance" (Platell 2010).

Thus, two potential conflicts appear to emerge. First, while there may be incentives for political parties to foreground their candidates' "diverse" identities to promote the idea that they are no longer "male, pale, and stale," and for reporters to employ the novelty of such candidates as a journalistic hook (Tolley 2015: 110), this emphasis on identity may be of less utility for candidates themselves on the constituency campaign trail. Second, although news frames focusing on the overall increase in numbers of female and/or BAME candidates were, on the whole, positive, references to the identities of BAME female candidates as individuals are often associated with enhanced scrutiny of their credentials. This is particularly important because the likelihood of racial or gender foregrounding is higher for challengers than long-standing MPs who enjoy an incumbency advantage in gaining reelection. For example, in coverage of Diane Abbott, her race was mentioned in 21 percent of articles and her gender in just 7 percent of articles ($n = 38$). While these proportions are arguably still high, they are far smaller than for BAME women overall.

Conclusion

These findings have several important implications. First, they demonstrate that intersectional approaches that consider multiple identity categories are necessary to provide nuanced analyses of press coverage of political actors, given the substantial variation in coverage of women of different racial identities. Furthermore, when considered in the light of similar findings from the United States and Canada (Gershon, 2012; Tolley 2015), they suggest that the exceptional disadvantages faced by minority women on the campaign trail are not country specific. Just as comparative single axis studies have demonstrated that female politicians in the aggregate face gendered bias by the press internationally (Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Ross 2002), there is growing evidence that systematic variation in coverage *among* women may go beyond national borders. The increasing diversity of national legislators provides important opportunities as well as the imperative for further investigation of this phenomenon. In future, systematic cross-national comparative analyses will be necessary to fully understand the extent to which intersectional variation in media coverage of political actors is consistent internationally. Such analyses will need to consider the effects of different political and media systems, levels of descriptive representation, and societal attitudes to race, gender, and other axes of identity.

Second, while this quantitative analysis demonstrates broad intersectional patterns in coverage, it also highlights the complex narratives and counternarratives around the presence of women, minorities, and minority women in positions of political power. As Tolley (2015: 99) argues, "racialized and gendered narratives are often subtle and implicit. A purely quantitative approach could conceal some of the more pernicious ways in which assumptions about visible minority women's backgrounds, political viability, and issue interests are communicated." Thus, further qualitative analysis is necessary to grapple with the content and implications of these debates, and should also consider the framing of privileged identity categories such as whiteness and maleness.

Third, building on Gershon's (2012) design, the candidate matching strategy employed here demonstrates the importance of controlling for additional politically relevant factors to account for alternative explanations of variation in press coverage of political actors. This is especially important for analyses of representations of minority women, given that their historical underrepresentation results in substantial differences in, for example, rates of incumbency, when compared with candidates from other intersectional groups. In addition, such analyses need to consider representations across a broad range of media platforms, and account for the effects of candidates' own self-presentations.

Finally, intersectional approaches are not limited to consideration of race and gender, and should also attend to the effects of categories such as class, religion, and sexuality in these contexts. While asking "where are all the women" (Smith 2010) or "why is the election so white" (Hirsch 2010) remains vital, it is crucial that future research on the press and political actors addresses difference *among* women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups in order not to obscure the experiences of all but the most privileged.

Appendix

Matched Candidate Samples

BAME Women.

ID	Name	Seat	Marginal	Party	Terms
1	Diane Abbott	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	No	Lab	5
2	Rushanara Ali	Bethnal Green and Bow	Yes	Lab	0
3	Dawn Butler	Brent Central	No	Lab	1
4	Annajoy David	Scarborough and Whitby	Yes	Lab	0
5	Helen Grant	Maidstone and The Weald	No	Con	0
6	Maryam Khan	Bury North	Yes	Lab	0
7	Sonia Klein	Ilford North	Yes	Lab	0
8	Shabana Mahmood	Birmingham Ladywood	No	Lab	0
9	Lisa Nandy	Wigan	No	Lab	0
10	Chi Onwurah	Newcastle upon Tyne Central	No	Lab	0
11	Priti Patel	Witham	No	Con	0
12	Yasmin Qureshi	Bolton South East	No	Lab	0
13	Mari Rees	Preseli Pembrokeshire	Yes	Lab	0
14	Shas Sheehan	Wimbledon	Yes	LD	0
15	Valerie Vaz	Walsall South	No	Lab	0

BAME Men.

ID	Name	Seat	Marginal	Party	Terms
1	David Lammy	Tottenham	No	Lab	3
2	Bambos Charalambous	Enfield Southgate	Yes	Lab	0
3	Sadiq Khan	Tooting	No	Lab	1
4	Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones	Chippenham	Yes	Con	0
5	Kwasi Kwarteng	Spelthorne	No	Con	0
6	Victor Agarwal	Swindon North	Yes	Lab	0
7	Bassam Mahfouz	Ealing Central and Acton	Yes	Lab	0
8	Anas Sarwar	Glasgow Central	No	Lab	0
9	Adam Afriyie	Windsor	No	Con	0
10	Sajid Javid	Bromsgrove	No	Con	0
11	Nadhim Zahawi	Stratford-on-Avon	No	Con	0
12	Sam Gyimah	Surrey East	No	Con	0
13	Ajmal Masroor	Bethnal Green and Bow	Yes	LD	0
14	Zuffar Haq	Harborough	Yes	LD	0
15	Chuka Umunna	Streatham	No	Lab	0

Note. BAME = black, Asian, and minority ethnic.

White Men (1).

ID	Name	Seat	Marginal	Party	Terms
1	Nick Raynsford	Greenwich and Woolwich	No	Lab	6
2	Martin Linton	Battersea	Yes	Lab	0
3	Jon Cruddas	Dagenham and Rainham	No	Lab	2
4	Andrew Pakes	Milton Keynes North	Yes	Lab	0
5	Damian Collins	Folkestone and Hythe	No	Con	0
6	Clive Grunshaw	Lancaster and Fleetwood	Yes	Lab	0
7	Stuart King	Putney	Yes	Lab	0
8	Gregg McClymont	Cumbernauld, Kilsyth, and Kirki	No	Lab	0
9	Steve Rotheram	Liverpool Walton	No	Lab	0
10	Ian Lavery	Wansbeck	No	Lab	0
11	Matthew Hancock	Suffolk West	No	Con	0
12	Jonathan Reynolds	Stalybridge and Hyde	No	Lab	0
13	Ronald Hughes	Aberconwy	Yes	Lab	0
14	John Shaw	Basingstoke	Yes	LD	0
15	Jack Dromey	Birmingham Erdington	No	Lab	0

White Men (2).

ID	Name	Seat	Marginal	Party	Terms
1	Jeremy Corbyn	Islington North	No	Lab	6
2	Nick Palmer	Broxtowe	Yes	Lab	0
3	Gareth Thomas	Harrow West	No	Lab	3
4	John Adams	Dartford	Yes	Lab	0
5	Phillip Lee	Bracknell	No	Con	0
6	Nick Bent	Warrington South	Yes	Lab	0
7	Gerry Ryan	Croydon Central	Yes	Lab	0
8	Grahame Morris	Easington	No	Lab	0
9	Christopher Evans	Islwyn	No	Lab	0
10	Alex Cunningham	Stockton North	No	Lab	0
11	Daniel Poulter	Suffolk Central and Ipswich No	No	Con	0
12	Karl Turner	Hull East	No	Lab	0
13	Alan Pugh	Arfon	Yes	Lab	0
14	Craig Dobson	Beverley and Holderness	Yes	LD	0
15	Tristram Hunt	Stoke-on-Trent Central	No	Lab	0

White Women (1).

ID	Name	Seat	Marginal	Party	Terms
1	Joan Ruddock	Lewisham Deptford	No	Lab	5
2	Lucy Powell	Manchester Withington	Yes	Lab	0
3	Mary Creagh	Wakefield	No	Lab	1
4	Sarah McCarthy-Fry	Portsmouth North	Yes	Lab	0
5	Claire Perry	Devizes	No	Con	0
6	Penny Martin	Blackpool North and Cleveleys	Yes	Lab	0
7	Alison Moore	Finchley and Golders Green	Yes	Lab	0
8	Pamela Nash	Airdrie and Shotts	No	Lab	0
9	Kate Green	Stretford and Urmston	No	Lab	0
10	Julie Elliott	Sunderland Central	No	Lab	0
11	Elizabeth Truss	Norfolk South West	No	Con	0
12	Yvonne Fovargue	Makerfield	No	Lab	0
13	Alana Davies	Vale of Glamorgan	Yes	Lab	0
14	Emily Gasson	Dorset North	Yes	LD	0
15	Emma Reynolds	Wolverhampton North East	No	Lab	0

White Women (2).

ID	Name	Seat	Marginal	Party	Terms
1	Kate Hoey	Vauxhall	No	Lab	5
2	Christine Russell	Chester, City of	Yes	Lab	0
3	Alison Seabeck	Plymouth Moor View	No	Lab	1
4	Teresa Murray	Rochester and Strood	Yes	Lab	0
5	Andrea Leadsom	Northamptonshire South	No	Con	0
6	Alison McGovern	Wirral South	Yes	Lab	0
7	Katrina Murray	Dundee East	Yes	Lab	0
8	Stella Creasy	Walthamstow	No	Lab	0
9	Bridget Phillipson	Houghton and Sunderland South	No	Lab	0
10	Pat Glass	Durham North West	No	Lab	0
11	Therese Coffey	Suffolk Coastal	No	Con	0
12	Teresa Pearce	Erith and Thamesmead	No	Lab	0
13	Julie Morgan	Cardiff North	Yes	Lab	0
14	Carol Woods	Durham, City of	Yes	LD	0
15	Jenny Chapman	Darlington	No	Lab	0

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Notes

1. To the best of my knowledge, based on searches of Independent Press Standards Organisation's (IPSO) news and rulings, and the Select Committee's 2010 and 2015 parliament inquiries, neither organization has yet acted on these recommendations.
2. Throughout this article, I refer to "race" as a political rather than biological category, drawing on Pei-te Lien et al. (2008).
3. While up-to-date cross-national figures on the descriptive representation of women in the aggregate (regardless of ethnicity or other identity markers) are widely available, this is still not the case regarding ethnic minorities, partly due to data collection constraints (Hughes, 2013a: 27). However, in addition to the U.K. data collected for this article, there is also evidence that minority ethnic women have made substantial gains in recent general elections in several other Western democracies with large minority ethnic populations. For example, following the 2014 midterms, the U.S. House of Representatives includes thirty-two minority female members, comprising 39% of women in the House (n = 84); Canada's House of Commons includes fifteen visible minority female members of parliament (MPs), eleven of whom were newly elected in 2015; and in France, where not a single nonwhite deputy had been elected to the National Assembly prior to 2007 (excluding representatives of France's overseas territories), the first who was joined by four more minority ethnic women in 2012 (Sources: CAWP 2013, 2015; Manning, 2014; macleans.ca/shape-of-the-house (own calculations); Murray (2012); see also Lépinard 2013).
4. While this analysis focuses on race and gender, Evans (2015) points out that disabled women and older women are also particularly underrepresented in British politics.
5. However, David Lammy, MP, has recently highlighted the lack of ethnic diversity on the BBC's flagship political debate show, *Question Time*. See Sweeny (2015).
6. http://yougov.co.uk/news/2013/10/03/35-electorate-uncomfortable-with-ethnic-minority-/.
7. I employ the classifications used in Pippa Norris's 2010 British General Election Constituency Results data set.
8. While there is an undeniably subjective element to evaluating the overall tone of a text, a test of intercoder reliability was performed by two coders for all variables, with agreement reaching a minimum score of .8, calculated using Krippendorf's alpha and at least 90 percent using simple percent agreement.
9. If Abbott's coverage is removed from the model, the negative coefficient for white women remains significant at $p < .05$.
10. Although the type of article (e.g., news reporting, editorial, or letter to the editor) was not included in the coding instrument, it does appear anecdotally to be the case that the tone of opinion pieces was unsurprisingly more polarized than news reports.

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Representations of Corruption in the British, French, and Italian Press: Audience Segmentation and the Lack of Unanimously Shared Indignation

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Abstract

As part of a larger European Union (EU)-funded project, this paper investigates the coverage of corruption and related topics in three European democracies: France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Based on Freedom House data, these countries are characterized by different levels of press freedom. A large corpus of newspaper articles (107,248 articles) from the period 2004 to 2013 were analyzed using dedicated software. We demonstrate that freedom of press is not the only dimension that affects the ability to and the way in which news media report on corruption. Because of its political partisanship, the Italian press tends to emphasize and dramatize corruption cases involving domestic public administrators and, in particular, politicians. The British coverage is affected mainly by market factors, and the press pays more attention to cases occurring abroad and in sport. The French coverage shares specific features with both the British and the Italian coverage: Newspapers mainly focus on corruption involving business companies and foreign actors, but they also cover cases involving domestic politicians. Media market segmentation, political parallelism, and media instrumentalization determine different representations preventing the establishment of unanimously shared indignation.

Keywords

corruption, media coverage, comparative research, freedom of the press, partisan journalism

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News Media and Corruption: Open Questions

How can the structure of a country's mass media system influence the coverage of a relevant issue such as corruption? This is the main question of this article, which presents a comparative study of the press coverage of corruption-related topics in the United Kingdom, France, and Italy.

Despite the theme's importance, most studies on the press coverage of corruption hold a minor position among more extensive studies that focus on somewhat different issues. Economists have examined corruption, democracy, and the news media and have noted that corruption may have a negative impact on economic development (Besley and Burgess 2001; Vaydia 2001). Most of these investigations adopt a strongly empirical approach (Chowdhury 2004; Fiorino et al. 2013; Freille et al. 2007) that is often based on simulations (Boeri and Severgnini 2008). Particular attention has been paid to the coverage of corruption in transitional democracies, particularly in Central Eastern European countries (Grigorescu 2006). Several studies have been conducted by nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and other civil-society and international organizations with a substantial normative aim (Stapenhurst 2000).

A small number of studies have been conducted on corruption and news making, particularly on bribes in return for news coverage (Ristow 2010; Tsetsura 2005; Yang 2012) and other external influences on news making (Pellegatta and Splendore 2014).

Shea conducted a content analysis of local press articles to demonstrate how political scandals influence U.S. elections (Shea 1999). Mccoy and Heckel (2001) measured the amount of coverage in leading newspapers worldwide while observing the emergence of global anticorruption policies. A few studies have focused specifically on corruption and media regulation (Stanig 2015).

The primary assumption of these studies is well summarized by the title of a frequently cited study: "A Free Press Is Bad News for Corruption" (Brunetti and Weder 2003). That is, the control exercised by the news media may reduce corruptive behaviors by diffusing and reinforcing sentiments of shame and indignation. This view has been fostered, in particular, by the World Bank (Stapenhurst 2000) and other studies (Chowdhury 2004; Treisman 2000). Attention has also been devoted to measuring how freedom of information (FOI) and transparency may reduce corruption (Lindstedt and Naurin 2010; Worthy and McClean 2015).

Freedom of the press is a relevant element to ensure that the press can successfully promote anticorruption policies and behaviors by disclosing and investigating corruptive procedures. In countries in which freedom of the press does not exist or is strongly limited, no control may be exercised over power holders by public opinion. In these countries, other agencies that could promote civic accountability are equally weak (Diamond and Morlino 2005). The previously mentioned research by Treisman (2000) shows that a narrow correlation exists between the diffusion of corruption and the levels of press freedom and the development of democratic institutions. However, the question is more complex and dubious with respect to countries in which the assessment of freedom of the press may be subject to different evaluations that must consider different parameters, such as historical and cultural traditions, religion, levels of economic development, political institutions, and government policies (Chowdhury 2004; Treisman 2000). Moreover, several studies have shown that even in countries in which the level of freedom of the press is at its peak, public opinion control is the subject of several limitations (Curran and Seaton 1997).

These studies suggest that freedom of the press is not the only factor that influences the coverage of corruption; other factors must also be considered. In a paper on the sudden appearance of the corruption issue in Central Eastern Europe, Alexandru Grigorescu proposed an interesting schema to understand the interplay among press coverage, the perception of corruption, and the effects of corruption (Grigorescu 2006). Grigorescu emphasizes the importance of so-called "exogenous factors," referring, in particular, to the effects of the action by civil associations and NGOs that determine what he calls "The Corruption Eruption" in the news media in East-Central Europe.

Our paper suggests that beyond freedom of the press, other factors that are "endogenous" to the media system must also be considered. First, the coverage of corruption may be influenced by the structure of the media system, particularly by its level of commercialization and market segmentation. The specific readership that each news outlet addresses may affect the coverage of corruption because different procedures for news selection may be effective depending on the readership of each newspaper.

Second, we can assume that the system of relationships between the news media and politics may be considered among the influencing factors as well. The level of political parallelism (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Seymour-Ure 1996; Van Kempen 2007) may affect the work of journalists either attacking political and business opponents or defending close personal figures. Even in the absence of strong political and ideological links, corruption may be the subject of instrumental coverage that aims to destroy the reputations of business and political actors, as many other studies have shown (Koltsova 2006; Ledeneva 2006).

We address these questions by investigating the journalistic coverage of corruption and related topics in the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. Based on the Freedom House data,[1] we can assume that the Italian press plays a minor role in challenging corruption because its level of freedom is lower than that of the United Kingdom and France, thus preventing control over public officials and politicians. Our data demonstrate that this statement is only partially true and that other factors must be considered. Following the models proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), Italy features a high level of political parallelism and news media instrumentalization (Ciaglia 2013; Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2002), whereas France and the United Kingdom's media systems are marked by a more pronounced market-driven logic (Davis 2007; Kuhn 2011).

The Study

This paper is based on a Computer-Assisted Content Analysis of the coverage of corruption-related topics in several leading British, French, and Italian daily newspapers from January 2004 to December 2013. For each country, four newspapers were selected to examine news outlets with different political orientations (Center-Left/Liberal and Center-Right/Conservative) and different genres of newspapers (elite, tabloid, and financial newspapers).[2]

The analysis of the British coverage of corruption was conducted on the quality liberal newspaper *The Guardian*, the more conservative *The Times*, and the tabloid newspaper *The Sun*, owned by Rupert Murdoch, which recently endorsed the Conservatives; and the London edition of the leading international business paper *The Financial Times.* For France, the analysis was conducted on the slightly Center-Left quality newspaper *Le Monde*; the Center-Right daily *Le Figaro*; the regional paper with the widest French circulation, *Ouest France*; and the business newspaper *Les Echos.* Finally, the Italian newspapers were the Center-Leftist *la Repubblica*; the Center-Rightist paper owned by the Berlusconi family *Il Giornale*; the most widely distributed Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* (with no clear political affiliation); and the business paper *Il Sole 24 Ore.*

Within the ten-year study period, all articles that contained in their headline or text at least one of nine keywords associated with corruption were selected for analysis.[3] The nine keywords (Table 1) refer to different types of behavior that could be connected to the most widespread definition of corruption, "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" (Transparency International 2009). Despite some variations (Gounev and Ruggiero 2012), this seems to be the definition that is accepted by most corruption scholars and most international organizations. Our keywords include factual behaviors that are usually defined as crimes (bribery, kickback) as well as other political and cultural attitudes (clientelism, favoritism, nepotism) that constitute the grounds for corruptive behaviors.

The keywords were intentionally limited in number, and each particular word was precisely associated with corruption in the main international glossaries on the theme (i.e., Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2008; Transparency International 2009). The selection was influenced by the limitation of the software, T-LAB, which was used for the study and was based on single words. It was also impossible to include expressions such as "fraud" that are frequently used to define crimes that have little to do with corruption.

A total of 107,248 British, French, and Italian news articles were analyzed using T-LAB, which is a linguistic and statistical software application for content analysis and text mining. T-LAB segments and lemmatizes the imported texts, enabling researchers to conduct co-occurrence, thematic, and comparative analyses. T-LAB can also be used to extract lists of meaningful context units (i.e., elementary contexts or short documents), allowing to deepen the thematic value of specific key terms. The selected articles constituted a corpus of data that was too large to be processed by T-LAB.[4] Consequently, the British, French, and Italian corpora were divided into three time periods (2004–2007, 2008–2011, and 2012–2013) and processed separately. In certain cases, it was possible to aggregate the software outputs after the data processing (e.g., for the word-frequency analysis). In other cases, the analysis was conducted on separate time periods (e.g., for the word-association analysis).

Table 1. The United Kingdom, Italy, and France (2004–2013): Recurring Keywords.

Keyword	The United Kingdom *N*	The United Kingdom %	Italy *N*	Italy %	France *N*	France %
Corruption	58,283	67.1	52,781	56.9	30,445	76.9
Bribe[a]	17,394	20.0	13,310	14.3	1,844	4.7
Kickback	1,497	1.7	5,676	6.1	352	0.9
Embezzlement	1,603	1.8	4,561	4.9	1,466	3.7
Collusion	4,172	4.8	1,911	2.1	1,738	4.4
Favoritism	2,235	2.6	830	0.9	1,225	3.1
Nepotism	1,580	1.8	1,593	1.7	848	2.1
Clientelism	46	0.1	2,315	2.5	1,690	4.3
Familism	0	0.0	1,182	1.3	0	0.0
Solicitation[b]	—	—	8,683	9	—	—
Total	86,810	100.0	92,842	100.0	39,608	100.0

[a]In the United Kingdom, "bribe" is aggregated with "bribery."
[b]"Solicitation" ("*concussione*" in Italian) was selected as a keyword only for Italian newspapers because in the Italian legal system, it indicates a specific kind of corruption.

Three Different Representations of Corruption

The coverage of corruption (and related topics), as reflected by the nine keywords, was substantially higher in Italy than in the United Kingdom and France (Figure 1).

Does this finding mean that Italy is a more corrupt country? Does it mean that, contrary to what one could assume from the Freedom House data, Italian journalists are more active in discovering and covering corruption stories? Does it mean that the higher level of political parallelism and instrumentalization of Italian media can push Italian journalists to provide extensive coverage of corruption cases?

Our analysis addresses the news media representations of corruption, not the factual level of corruption in the country. Thus, our data do not allow evaluations of whether a country is more or less corrupt than others. However, the data show that the lower level of press freedom assessed by Freedom House does not prevent Italian journalism from producing an extensive discussion of corruption cases. The difference in coverage between the three observed countries may refer to the other two questions that we addressed, that is, the level of political parallelism/instrumentalization and the structure of the news media market.

In fact, the differences between the three countries involve not only the amount of coverage but also the topics that are covered and how they are covered. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show the words most often associated with the keyword "bribe" in the three countries in the 2008 to 2011 period.[5]

Because of the traditional weakness of investigative journalism in Italy[6] (Sidoti 2003), the judiciary occupies an important position within the Italian coverage (e.g.,

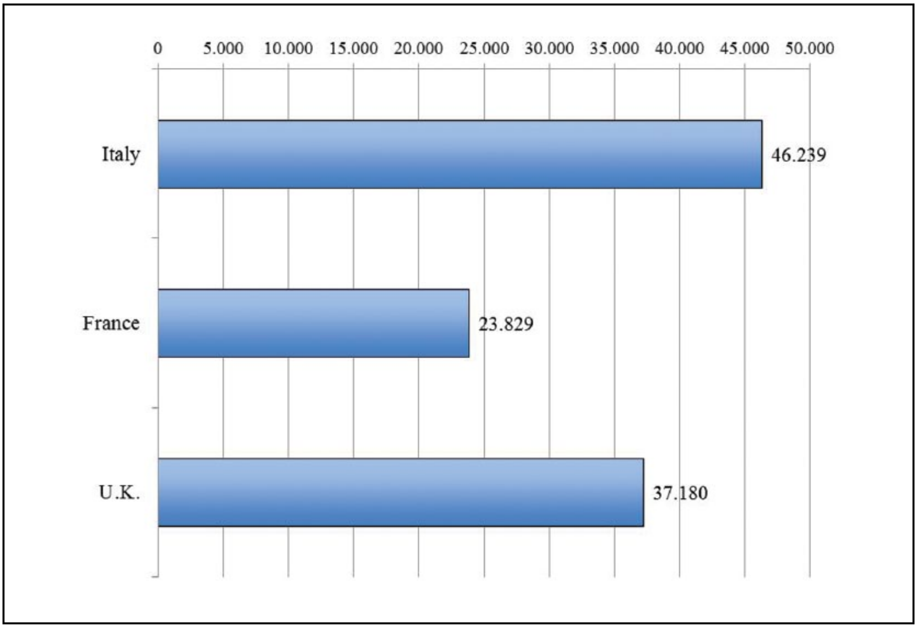

Figure 1. Total number of articles per country containing the selected keywords (2004–2013).

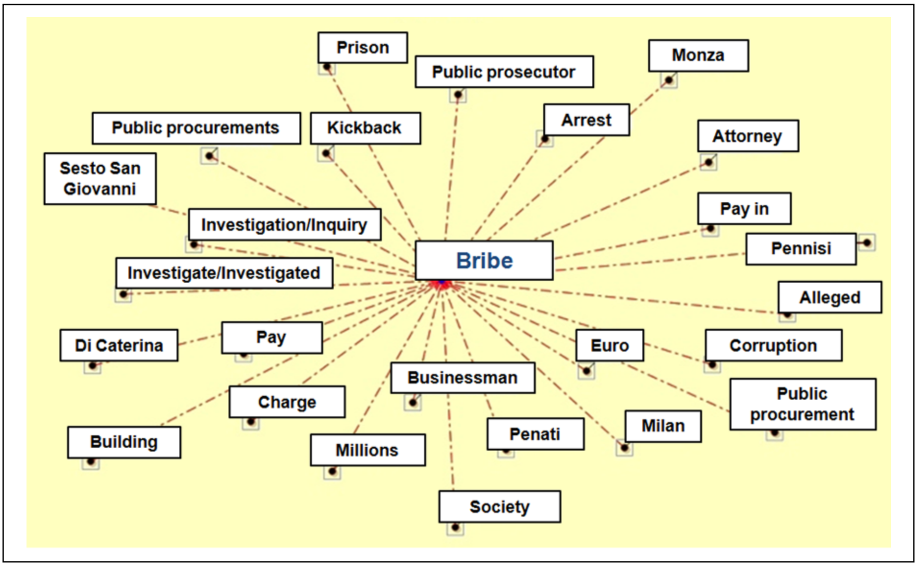

Figure 2. Italy (2008–2011): Words most often associated with keyword “bribe.”

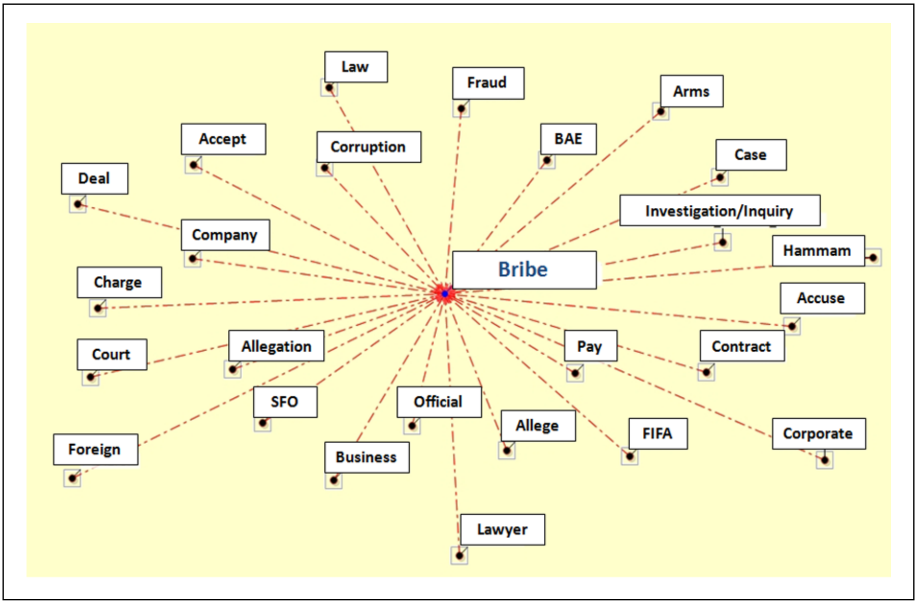

Figure 3. The United Kingdom (2008–2011): Words most often associated with keywords "bribe/bribery."

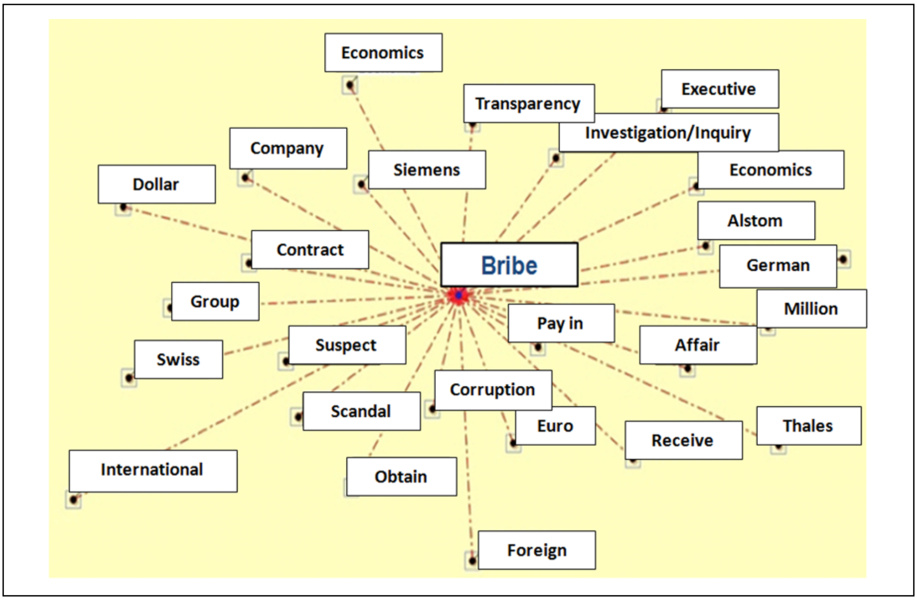

Figure 4. France (2008–2011): Words most often associated with keyword "bribe."

words such as "investigation" and "accusation" are frequently associated with the keyword "bribe").

Most important, Figure 2 shows that the main focus of the Italian coverage of corruption is on domestic politics. At the center of the stories are political figures and public administrators (e.g., the cases that concern Pennisi, Penati, Di Caterina, Sesto San Giovanni[7]), whereas less attention is devoted to corporations and businessmen. Thus, when Italian newspapers cover a corrupt exchange between an agent (usually a public official or a politician) and a client (usually a businessman), the focus is often on the agent.[8] The focus on the corrupt actor, the agent stresses how the Italian coverage is often addressed by the attempt to destroy the reputation of politicians and public administrators. This kind of press instrumentalization pattern is less frequent in France and the United Kingdom.

Table 2 confirms the centrality of domestic politicians within the Italian coverage. Press attention is particularly focused on Berlusconi, whose name is associated with tax evasion cases and the so-called "Bunga Bunga" affair[9] (in which he was accused of solicitation) and on his inner circle (composed of Ghedini, Mills, and Ruby).[10] Other politicians belonging to both the Leftist political party (e.g., Penati) and the Rightist party (e.g., Pennisi and Formigoni)[11] also appear frequently. Stories focusing on foreign cases of corruption rarely appear in the Italian coverage.

A distinctive characteristic of the Italian coverage of corruption is the dramatization and spectacularization of cases of corruption involving domestic politicians. Many of these cases have a local origin (e.g., the Penati case) but are widely covered by the national press. They become important topics of national political debate and conflict that are discussed under different perspectives and by other politicians and experts.

For Italian "partisan" newspapers, corruption scandals are occasions to attack political competitors or to defend politicians whose views these newspapers support. Their stories remain "on stage" for many days and often return to the front page. This also occurs because of the important place occupied by the judiciary, which involves long, highly formal, complex trials so that the case returns often to the front page.

This particular way of covering corruption is typical of the polarized-pluralist model of professional journalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004). In this type of journalism, newspapers primarily address a politically socialized readership, and a high level of press partisanship exists together with partisan readerships (Legnante and Sani 2008). The news media intervene in the public discussion in an effort to affect the decision-making process and to destroy the reputation of business and political competitors, following the logic of what John Thompson calls a "politics of trust" (Thompson 2000) and media instrumentalization. The lower position that the Italian press occupies in the freedom of the press ranking does not prevent Italian journalists from covering corruption cases and, as we observe later, taking positions on these matters. Instead, they cover corruption as an occasion for political struggle, confirming the particular structure of the Italian media system.

In the United Kingdom and France, the personal names of domestic political figures appear more rarely (see Figures 3 and 4). In both countries, the coverage is mainly focused on foreign political leaders and heads of state (see Figure 5 and Table 2).

Table 2. The United Kingdom, Italy, and France (2004–2013): Most Frequent Family Names.

	The United Kingdom		Italy		France	
Rank	Family Names	Frequency	Family Names	Frequency	Family Names	Frequency
1	PUTIN (Vladimir, president of Russia)	7,931	BERLUSCONI (Silvio, ex-Italian prime minister)	37,301	SARKOZY (Nicolas, ex-president of France)	3,760
2	BERLUSCONI (Silvio, ex-Italian prime minister)	7,498	DI PIETRO (Antonio, Italian politician)	6,739	PUTIN (Vladimir, president of Russia)	3,615
3	BLAIR (Tony, ex-U.K. prime minister)	7,169	MONTI (Mario, ex-Italian prime minister)	5,464	BERLUSCONI (Silvio, ex-Italian prime minister)	3,314
4	OBAMA (Barack, president of the United States)	6,848	FORMIGONI (Roberto, Italian politician, ex-president of Lombardia)	4,733	BUSH (George, ex-president of the United States)	2,293
5	BROWN (J. Gordon, ex-U.K. prime minister)	6,821	RUBY (name of a scandal involving Berlusconi)	4,639	OBAMA (Barack, president of United States)	2,202
6	BUSH (George, ex-president of United States)	5,711	MILLS (David, British lawyer)	4,574	LULA (L.I., ex-president of Brazil)	1,982
7	CAMERON (David, U.K. prime minister)	5,256	PENATI (Italian local politician)	4,158	CHIRAC (Jacques, ex-president of France)	1,932
8	KARZAI (Hamid, ex-president of Afghanistan)	5,136	ALFANO (Angelino, Italian minister)	3,949	BEN ALI (Zine El Abidine, ex-president of Tunisia)	1,682
9	GREEN (David, SFO's director)	3,998	PRODI (Romano, ex-Italian prime minister)	3,827	CHAVEZ (Hugo, ex-president of Venezuela)	1,648
10	BLATTER (Joseph, president of FIFA)	3,688	PUTIN (Vladimir, president of Russia)	3,764	HOLLANDE (François, president of France)	1,403

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

	The United Kingdom		Italy		France	
Rank	Family Names	Frequency	Family Names	Frequency	Family Names	Frequency
11	ZUMA (Jacob, president of South Africa)	3,604	BERSANI (Italian politician)	3,672	ROYAL (Ségolène, French politician)	1,326
12	THAKSIN (Shinawatra, ex-Thai prime minister)	3,439	OBAMA (Barack, president of the United States)	3,327	ABBAS (Abu Mazen, president of Palestine)	1,292
13	MURDOCH (Rupert, business magnate)	2,978	PREVITI (Cesare, ex-Italian politician and convicted criminal)	3,191	MUBARAK (Hosni, ex-president of Egypt)	1,275
14	SARKOZY (Nicolas, ex-president of France)	2,765	NAPOLITANO (Giorgio, ex-president of Italy)	3,152	SHARON (Ariel, ex-Israeli prime minister)	1,265
15	BO (Xilai, Chinese politician)	2,627	BOSSI (Umberto, Italian politician)	2,829	ARAFAT (Yasser, Palestinian leader)	1,248
16	MUSHARRAF (Pervez, ex-president of Pakistan)	2,496	BUSH (George, ex-president of the United States)	2,765	SADDAM (Hussein, ex-president of Iraq)	1,007
17	BHUTTO (Benazir, ex-president of Pakistan)	2,448	TREMONTI (Giulio, ex-Italian minister)	2,612	KARZAI (Hamid, ex-president of Afghanistan)	1,002
18	MILLS (David, British lawyer)	2,385	GRILLO (Beppe, Italian politician)	2,510	MEDVEDEV (Dimitry, Russian prime minister)	953
19	MUBARAK (Hosni, ex-president of Egypt)	2,354	GHEDINI (Niccolò, Italian lawyer and politician)	2,492	BO (Xilai, Chinese politician)	910
20	SADDAM (Hussein, ex-president of Iraq)	2,275	SEVERINO (ex-Italian minister and name of a law on corruption)	2,241	IOUCHTCHENKO (Victor, ex-president of Ukraine)	905

Note. SFO = Serious Fraud Office; FIFA = Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

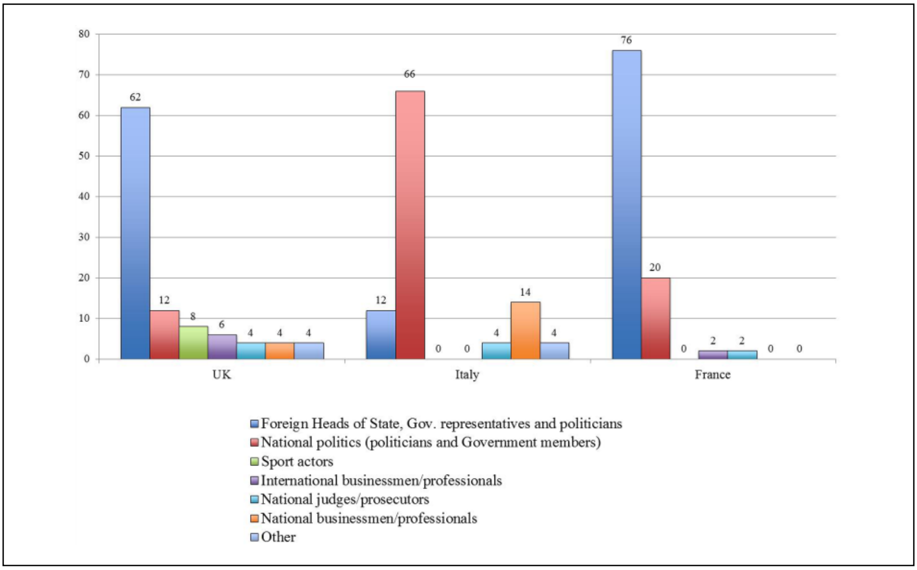

Figure 5. The United Kingdom, Italy, and France (2004–2013): Most frequent words: Kind of actors (percent; analysis limited to the first fifty family names).

These foreign actors appear in the news either because they are directly involved in corruption cases (Zuma, Thaksin, Bo Xilai, Lula, Berlusconi) or because they are associated with a high level of corruption in their country and, therefore, are asked to implement anticorruption policies (e.g., Karzai, Abbas). See the following excerpts:

> Opposition parties have accused President Jacob Zuma of being at the centre of one of the biggest corruption scandals in democratic South Africa, after reports that millions of rand of taxpayers' money was spent on a swimming pool and other facilities at his private home. (*The Guardian*, November 30, 2013)

> President Hamid Karzai pledged yesterday to fight corruption and reach out to his Taliban opponents as he faced US pressure to deliver better government after winning the disputed election in Afghanistan. (*The Financial Times*, November 4, 2009)

In the United Kingdom, Berlusconi is a frequently discussed foreign leader because his case involves a British lawyer, David Mills, the former husband of the British Member of Parliament and Minister with both the Blair and Brown governments, Tessa Jowell (Table 2). Domestic political leaders appear primarily in connection with the debate on domestic anticorruption policies and laws.

Corruption cases that involve large corporations are frequently covered by the British press (see Table 3). In these cases, the focus is placed on the client; often, this is a large corporation. In contrast, less attention is devoted to the agent, who is often a foreign public official and, therefore, is of less interest to the British readership. This coverage largely depends on the initiatives of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), which is an independent government department under the superintendence of the attorney general that investigates foreign companies (in most cases, the “clients” in the corruption exchange) that are listed on the London Stock Exchange. British companies, such as BAE, Rolls-Royce, and Glaxo, are frequently reported together with foreign companies, such as Siemens. Corruption in sports is another important topic. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), Joseph Blatter, Bernie Ecclestone, and a number of football players and trainers involved in cases of bribery, match-fixing, and nepotism frequently appear in the pages of British newspapers.

From news media representations, it seems that political corruption (as reflected by the nine selected keywords) is not a British problem except for the efforts that domestic politicians exert in connection with anticorruption policies in the United Kingdom and abroad. Even the scandal over members of Parliament (MP) expenses that dramatically affected British political life in 2009 did not emerge as a significant case in our analysis. In fact, this scandal was not associated with any of our nine keywords. Instead, it was referred to as fraud, abuse, misuse, unlawfulness, or false accounting, which are terms that we did not consider in our study. Of course, this outcome raises a methodological problem (discussed in this paper’s final section) because the scandal received significant coverage (Winnet and Rayner 2009; Worthy and McClean 2015) and forced the resignation of the Speaker of the House and several MPs. However, our investigative method did not register this affair. In this regard, another considerable problem (that we discuss later) concerns the differences between judiciary systems, which define the same crimes with different terms.[12]

The British thematic choices can be related to the specific news outlets we have investigated. *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times* are important newspapers with readerships that extend well beyond the national borders. *The Financial Times*, in particular, is a highly influential paper among worldwide business elites with globalized interests. In addition, the London Stock Exchange occupies a highly important position in the world market and attracts companies and investors from around the world. It is undeniable that London-based newspapers reflect the specific position that London itself and its newspapers occupy in the world market. It is also undeniable that a certain ethnocentrism may influence the selection of news in both the United Kingdom and France. Both countries have a well-rooted legacy of public administration ethos deriving from specific education and training and a more diffused civil service tradition that embraces many sectors of community life (Heywood 2012; Horton 2006). This legacy may prevent the diffusion of corruptive behaviors and likely has some influence on journalists who perceive the national public administration and politics as more trustworthy and honest than those of other countries.

Although the political and cultural affiliation of *The Guardian*, like that of other British newspapers, cannot be underestimated, politics occupies a minor place compared with the situation in Italy and France. The idea of maintaining distance from the government is better established in the United Kingdom than in the other two

Table 3. Sectors Emerging from the Analysis of the Words Most Frequently Associated with Our Keywords.

Keywords	UK	Italy	France
Corruption	**Focus on large corporations, sport and foreign politics** (focus on specific cases, e.g. FIFA, BAE, Karzai)	**Domestic politics** (focus on Berlusconi cases)	**Foreign politics, little presence of domestic politics** (no focus on specific cases, but on various cases involving foreign Head of States and politicians)
Bribe/bribery	**Focus on large (both national and foreign) corporations, on transnational business transactions and on sport** (BAE, Siemens, Berlusconi/Mills, FIFA, Ecclestone)	**Domestic politics** and, partially, private business (focus on specific cases involving local politicians, e.g. Penati and Pennisi cases) (also Finmeccanica and EUR S.p.a. cases)	**Focus on large (both national and foreign) corporations and on transnational business transactions** (Siemens, Volkswagen, Alstom, Thales, Safran, Sanofi)
Kickback	**Foreign politics, business sector and sport** (focus on specific cases abroad, e.g. Oil for food, Sarkozy and FIFA)	**Domestic politics** (focus on specific cases involving local politicians, e.g. Nicoli)	Rarely used in French coverage
Embezzlement	**Foreign politics** (focus on specific cases abroad, e.g. Berlusconi, Navalny and Bo Xilai)	**Domestic politics** (focus on specific cases associated to politics, e.g. Delbono, Minzolini and Fiorito)	**Domestic politics and international affairs** (focus on cases involving local and national politicians, e.g. the Guérini and the Chirac affairs, and on international cases, e.g. the Oil for Food and the Navalny case)
Collusion	Collusion with terrorism, but also collusion in the private business sector and sport	Collusion with terrorism and mafia	**Domestic politics** (word used by French politicians to discredit political rivals)
Clientelism	**International affairs** (focus on Greece and Italy/Berlusconi)	**Domestic politics** (focus on specific cases involving politicians from southern Italy, i.e. Cuffaro, Lombardo and Bassolino)	**Domestic and international politics** (focus on the Guérini affair and on political situations abroad, e.g. the case of Greece)
Nepotism	**Business sector, football and foreign politics** (focus on the Murdoch, Sarkozy and Redknapp cases)	**University** (focus on scandals within the University world)	**Foreign affairs and domestic politics** (focus on cases abroad, e.g. the Wolfowitz scandal, and one domestic case involving the son of Sarkozy)
Favouritism	Sport (not always linked to corruptive behaviours)	**University and domestic politics** (focus on University scandals and on specific cases involving politicians, i.e. Cancellieri-Ligresti and Formigoni-Daccò)	**Domestic politics** (focus on cases involving national and local politicians, e.g. the Woerth, Sarkozy and Ayrault cases)
Familism	Not present in the UK coverage	**Domestic politics and University** (focus on specific cases involving politicians, e.g. Bassolino and Bossi, and Univeristy scandals)	Not present in the French coverage
Solicitation	N.A.	**Ruby scandal and domestic poltics** (focus on public administration, in particular health system, and specific cases associated to politics, e.g. Penati, Mastella)	N.A.

countries, although this attitude does not prevent British journalism from showing clear political affiliations (Davis 2007; Seymour-Ure 1996). Our results seem to confirm what Aeron Davis (2007: 48) called, referring to the United Kingdom, “proxy fourth estate journalism in political journalism.” Journalists may be understood as keeping politicians in check, but in practice, they are mainly influenced by economic pressures. This is also the case for the coverage of corruption that is particularly dependent on market segmentation; each newspaper seems to be clearly addressed to its own "niche" audience. For instance, sports are thoroughly covered in the tabloid papers (e.g., *The Sun*) and in other newspapers of the Murdoch conglomerate that have been affected by tabloidization, such as *The Times* (McLachlan and Golding 2000).

The French coverage of corruption shares specific features with the British and Italian coverage. It devotes substantial attention to corruption that involves large corporations, both French and foreign companies, such as the German multinational companies Siemens and Volkswagen; the French multinational corporations Alstom, Thales, Safran, and Sanofi; the Italian group Finmeccanica; the British pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK); and the U.S. corporation Wal-Mart[13] (Table 3).

In addition, French journalists extensively discuss the levels and the circumstances of corruption in foreign countries and specific cases of corruption that occur abroad (Table 3; see also Table 2 for the most frequently occurring names of foreign actors).

In the French press, as noted also in other studies (Kuhn 2014), the names of domestic politicians are often associated with our nine keywords. In some cases, they are covered with regard to their political office (e.g., Chirac and Sarkozy were presidents of the French Republic), similar to other political figures such as Obama or Bush. On other occasions, they are mentioned because they are involved in corruption cases. Chirac is covered because of the scandal in which he was involved when he was the mayor of Paris, and Sarkozy is covered due to the designation of his son as head of Epad, a development agency for the Parisian business district La Défense:

> The sacrifice made by a son for the sake of his father. Jean Sarkozy is not going to be president of Epad, the development agency for the Parisian business district La Défense. . . . Since October 8th, when Jean Sarkozy officially became a candidate for the presidency of Epad, the affair of the President's son has strongly embarrassed the political majority. Accused of nepotism from the left wing, Nicolas Sarkozy has fought tooth and nail for his son's candidacy. (*Le Figaro*, October 23, 2009)

A major difference from the Italian coverage of corruption emerges: The French press does not dramatize these political cases, which are mostly covered in the form of fact-centered reporting. The cases are covered, but not as extensively as in Italy. In addition, they quickly disappear from the front pages of the French newspapers.

In part, the outlined tendencies depend on the specific character of *Le Monde* as another leading international newspaper and, more generally, on specific features of the French media system. France has a different configuration of media ownership: There is no equivalent of a powerful commercial media company such as Berlusconi's Mediaset in Italy or Murdoch's News Corporation in the United Kingdom, although there are important media groups such as Hersant and Amaury. There is also a different type of relationship to politics. As highlighted by Kuhn, in France, "The era of newspaper titles owned by or closely affiliated to political parties has long been over" (Kuhn 2014: 32). Both the national daily newspapers and the regional dailies are reluctant to identify systematically with a particular party or a leading political figure. In the past, the executive branch of government (rather than political parties) has played an important role in affecting media policies and content and has long been a "primary definer," although this trend is diminishing (Kuhn 2011: 105).

Although major differences emerge in the way in which newspapers in the United Kingdom, France, and Italy cover corruption and related topics, there are also similarities. In all three countries, our nine keywords were used in connection with two main areas: anticorruption policies and corruption cases. The first area was particularly important in the United Kingdom in relation to both domestic affairs and the situation abroad. The second area was the main focus of the Italian coverage, although attention was also devoted to anticorruption policies, primarily when a new law was discussed in the Italian Parliament, which also received a certain amount of attention in the French and British coverage.

In all three countries, the word "corruption" is the most widely diffused of our nine keywords (Table 1). It is used with a general meaning (e.g., "this is a corrupt country" or "he is a corrupt politician"), whereas other words, such as "bribe" and "kickback," are used in a more specific way and in specific cases (e.g., "he paid a bribe"). In fact-centered news articles, "bribe" and "kickback" refer to specific behaviors (i.e., receiving and paying money to obtain results in an illegal way), whereas in articles that do not focus on specific facts or judiciary proceedings, "corruption" indicates more general behavior and refers to political or business situations, particularly abroad.

So-called "petty corruption"[14] is underrepresented in the print press. Instead, the analyzed newspapers seem to pay particular attention to "grand corruption" cases that involve important public figures and large amounts of public funds or other important public property or goods. Most of the investigated newspapers (primarily in Italy and in France) address "educated" readers (at least compared with television audiences) who are interested in public affairs, economics, politics, and public administration, which are the sectors in which "grand corruption" occurs most often. The obvious exception is *The Sun*; this newspaper devotes substantially less attention to corruption in general and to grand corruption in particular.[15]

Words such as "nepotism," "clientelism," and "familism" are much less frequently used in all three countries. They appear most frequently in Italy, whereas they are more rarely used in France and the United Kingdom (Table 1). In France and the United Kingdom, "clientelism" is often associated with Greece, whose difficult economic circumstances are ascribed to these corruptive behaviors. In Italy, this word is primarily used to describe political misbehaviors in Southern Italy and Sicily (Table 3).

The word "nepotism" also reveals important differences. In France, it is linked to foreign news, such as the case of Paul Wolfowitz, the former American president of the World Bank who arranged a promotion and a pay increase for his partner. However, the word is also used in connection with Sarkozy and the previously cited case of his son. In the United Kingdom, there are few specific cases of nepotism. In one case, Rupert Murdoch was accused of nepotism when he appointed his son head of Sky UK. There were also cases of nepotism in sports, such as the cases of the Serbian coach Petkovic and those of Redknapp and Lampard (Table 3). In Italy, "nepotism" appears to be associated with the academic world. "University," "faculty," "student," "professor," "research," and "department" are examples of frequently associated words. News stories frequently refer to university-related scandals as "Parentopoli" (Relative-city) because of the extraordinary concentration of family members (*parenti*) in many university departments, primarily in South Italy.

Different Attention Strategies to Corruption

Differences in the coverage of corruption also emerge among the analyzed newspapers within each individual country. Each newspaper seems to have its own view of corruption and devotes attention to topics and actors that differ from those covered by the other newspapers. A nationally shared representation of corruption appears to be partially limited because each news outlet adopts its own *strategy of attention* regarding corruption-related topics.

These findings on the different representations of corruption emerged through the use of the T-LAB research tool "specificity analysis," which indicates words that are over- and underused by a specific news outlet compared with other newspapers. We offer a limited number of examples in this article.

Everyday life, entertainment, and sports represent the main topics of tabloid papers. In its articles on corruption cases that occurred during the 2012 to 2013 period, *The Sun* used words such as "FA" (the U.K. football association), "match-fixing," "League," and "sport," which were nearly absent from the other British newspapers.[16] Financial papers pay particular attention to cases of corruption that involve large corporations and businessmen in the international arena,[17] who represent their main niche readership.

Other competition needs may also affect corruption coverage. *The Guardian* is a major competitor of Rupert Murdoch's media conglomerate (which includes *The Times* and *The Sun*). The emphasis placed on Murdoch himself, on the involvement of his journalists in the "phone-hacking scandal" and on the criticisms against Murdoch's media group raised by the Levenson inquiry is because *The Guardian* invested considerable journalistic resources to cover these stories. At the same time, this emphasis may be viewed as a strategy of attacking a competitor in the media market and reaffirming the main character of *The Guardian* as a more "serious" and accountable paper.

In the 2008 to 2011 period, *The Guardian* used the word "Murdoch" 1,244 of the 1,543 times the magnate's name occurred in the four analyzed British newspapers (80.6 percent of total occurrences; chi-square test value: 934.6). The reason is clear, as indicated by the following excerpt:

> It is often said, without too much evidence incidentally, that Rupert Murdoch is a (smaller) republican. This claim is largely based on his statements going back to the 1970s about a dislike for inherited privilege, the (then) rigidity of the British class structure and the stuffiness of "the establishment." However, this has never stopped him from indulging in nepotism. Down the years, his own family—and those who have married into it—have

> been given top jobs within his sprawling business empire. So it is hardly a surprise that his son, James, has been elevated to a position that places him in line to become News Corporation's boss. (*The Guardian*, March 31, 2011)

In the same period, *The Guardian* overused the name Rebekah Brooks (474 of 704 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 182.4) and the phrase "phone-hacking" (300 of 426 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 139.2). Similarly, from 2012 to 2013, *The Guardian* overused the word "Levenson" (502 of 854 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 118.1).

Political segmentation prevails in Italy and, to a lesser extent, in France. In Italy, *la Repubblica*, a traditional Leftist newspaper, reflects the large amount of attention paid to the corruption affairs involving Silvio Berlusconi (in particular, the Ruby affair), whose media conglomerate is a competitor of the *la Repubblica* group. For example, in articles on corruption-related topics published between 2008 and 2011, the newspaper overused the words "Berlusconi" (45.6 percent of 19,694 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 207.0) and "Bunga Bunga" (69.8 percent of 464 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 236.1). In contrast, *Il Giornale*, the newspaper owned by the Berlusconi family, devoted particular attention to all news that could be used to denigrate the political opponents of "il Cavaliere." In particular, this newspaper focused on dubious affairs that involved the ex-judge Antonio Di Pietro, one of Berlusconi's chief accusers. Similar attention was devoted to Marco Travaglio, a journalist who investigated many of the Berlusconi affairs.[18] Examples can be found in the following excerpts:

> The leftists welcomed magistrates whose strongest player was a "public prosecutor policeman" by the name of Antonio Di Pietro. He went to the chief prosecutor Borelli to tell him, "I'll destroy him," referring to Berlusconi. (*Il Giornale*, October 9, 2009)

> In Silvio Berlusconi's Arcore villa, "it is obvious" that some people were prostitutes. In addition, the Prime Minister conducted a "military attack" on the Milan police station to prevent the young Moroccan Ruby from remaining in custody due to the serious risk that she would reveal the evenings of Bunga Bunga. (*La Repubblica*, June 15, 2011)

French coverage presents a type of political segmentation that closely resembles the Italian coverage. *Le Monde*, a more Leftist newspaper than the others we investigated, pays more attention to corruption cases that involve Rightist politicians (e.g., the Pasqua case[19]), whereas *Le Figaro* (more Rightist-oriented) pays particular attention to cases of corruption that involve socialist politicians (e.g., the Guérini case[20]).

Final Remarks and Study Limitations

The level of freedom of the press is not the only factor that influences the coverage of corruption. Political parallelism, news media instrumentalization, and market segmentation must be considered as well.

Even within the same country, the representation of corruption seems to depend, at least in part, on media market segmentation. Each news media outlet offers a slightly different image depending on its addressed niche audience. This segmentation, primarily the segmentation based on political affiliation, may prevent the emergence of a unanimously shared sentiment of indignation and the shared "virtue control" that scholars have noted as a means to spread and reinforce civic engagement (Pizzorno 1998).

Different and even contrasting representations of corruption may disseminate a high level of uncertainty and doubt regarding events, persons, and circumstances related to corruption cases. This may occur primarily in transitional democracies and highly polarized democracies, where the idea of "common good" appears to be weaker and is constantly under scrutiny and debate and where media instrumentalization is a frequent practice (Voltmer 2006; Zielonka 2015). In these situations, the risk is the increase of mutual distrust and of distrust in the government and political institutions in general.

In particular, this is the situation in Italy, whose public sphere, as this study demonstrates, may be defined as a case of "dramatized polarization" (Mancini 2013). This situation is rooted in the history of Italian journalism but undoubtedly has been pushed further by the Berlusconi entrance into the political arena. The coverage of corruption is directed by a logic of instrumentalization rather than a logic of fair control over power holders in defense of a shared public interest. A logic of instrumentalization means that journalism responds to interests that are particular, vested, and partisan. Corruption is covered because it allows the media to pursue specific goals that often favor private interests over general interest and that polarize opinions. Each newspaper establishes its own hierarchy of importance and promotes its perspective, preventing the establishment and the reinforcement of a commonly shared sentiment of indignation through which corruptive behaviors could be prevented, controlled, and condemned. It is possible that similar circumstances could be observed in many transitional democracies (Voltmer 2006, 2013).

The British coverage of corruption appears to be affected by the exigencies of media market competition and segmentation, as noted by Aeron Davis (2007: 54), who observed, "News values are very much market oriented." In France, the place of politics in journalism appears to be less important than in Italy, and cases of political corruption do not undergo the process of dramatization and instrumentalization that characterizes the Italian context and that risks reinforcing political polarization. In a way, the French news media combine characterizations that feature both the British and the Italian media systems (Benson 2013; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Kuhn 1994, 2014).

There is no doubt that the news media may curb corruption through tangible means (e.g., investigating, reporting, and controlling specific cases of corruption) or intangible means (e.g., reinforcing a shared sense of common interest and good; Stapenhurst 2000). Similarly, there is no doubt that the level of freedom of the press represents an important aspect of the ability of the news media to exercise a curbing influence, mostly when other sources of social control are either missing or weak. However, our

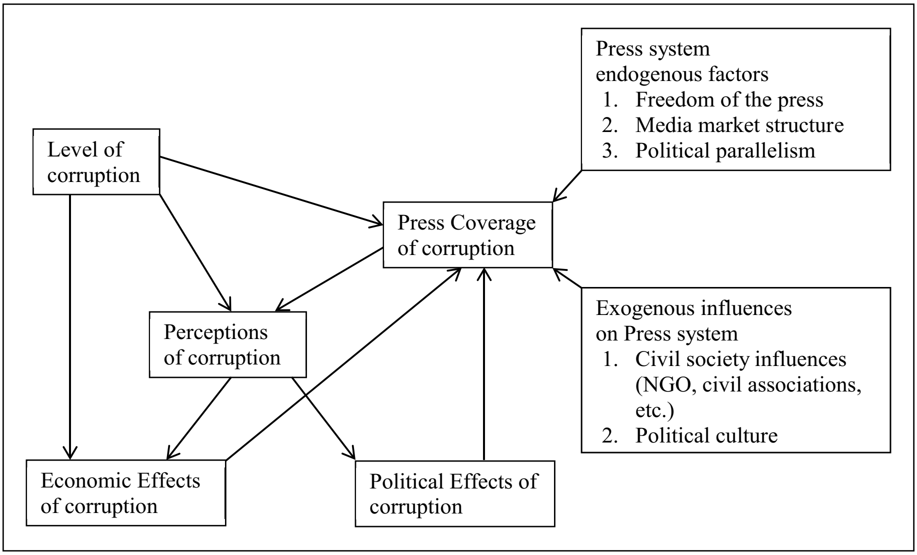

Figure 6. Interplay among press coverage, level, perceptions, and effects of corruption.
Source. Adapted from Grigorescu (2006).

investigation indicates that other dimensions must also be considered. In this sense, we would enrich the schema proposed by Grigorescu by adding other factors, such as media market structure and political parallelism, that are closely related to the structure of the news media market and its relationship to politics (see Figure 6).

Additional remarks must be presented regarding the strengths and limitations of comparative analysis. Our comparative perspective highlighted national specificities of the news media coverage of corruption that emerged in comparison with other countries. If the countries had been analyzed independently, the distinctive characteristics of Italian, French, or British coverage would not have been revealed. The large amount of attention that the Italian news media devote to domestic political corruption emerged in comparison with the British and French choices. Similarly, it was possible to note the important role played by sports in the British coverage of corruption through a comparison with the Italian and French newspapers. We believe that our study has confirmed that *comparative research makes visible the invisible* (Blumler et al. 1992).

However, limitations exist, and problems emerged in this study. We investigated a sample of newspapers in each country. Although we attempted to be as inclusive as possible of all of the existing news media specificities, our selection may have affected our findings. Moreover, other news media, particularly television, may offer different representations than the printed press.

We conducted a computer-assisted content analysis to investigate a large number of articles over a long period of time. We selected the articles using specific keywords, which raises methodological questions. First, there is no doubt that problems of culture, language, and translation exist. In a comparative study, such problems cannot be underestimated. The case of the British MPs accused of misusing their parliamentary allowance highlights these cultural and linguistic problems. As previously noted, although the case was a front-page story in the United Kingdom for several weeks, the nine keywords we used did not enable us to retrieve any considerable coverage. This outcome may help to explain why corruption does not seem to be a British problem; behaviors that in another country would have been labeled with one of the words we associated with corruption were not labeled as such in the United Kingdom. As recent studies have noted, such differences confirm the difficulty of establishing a universal concept of corruption (Rothstein 2014; Rothstein and Torsello 2013).

Comparative content analysis of a large number of cases using keyword selection may result in shortcomings because similar "things" may be named using different words (Rothstein 2014; Vannucci 2012; Wickberg 2016) depending on a country's political culture, its legal system (such as in the case we noted), and the professional culture and routines of its journalists.

When applied to a large number of cases, our research is a preliminary, descriptive study that must be complemented by a more in-depth content analysis by human coders, who will be able to enrich the information and elaborate the national peculiarities that our study has identified. Many of the conclusions we suggest need to be tested through methods beyond content analysis, which, we believe, has presented an interesting foundation for further research.

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Notes

1. Based on Freedom House data, the United Kingdom and France are defined as "free press systems" (the United Kingdom ranks twenty-third, and France ranks twenty-fourth), whereas Italy is defined as "partly free" and is ranked thirty-first. The evaluation of freedom of the press in Italy may be listed among the dubious cases in which other parameters must be considered.
2. In both Italy and France, tabloid newspapers equivalent to *The Sun* do not exist. Therefore, two elite newspapers were analyzed in these countries.
3. The analysis of the Italian coverage used ten keywords because in this country, the term solicitation ("*concussione*") is recognized as a specific crime by Italian law and is strictly connected to corruptive behaviors. The selection of news articles was conducted using newspaper database services provided by LexisNexis and Factiva–Dow Jones.

4. T-LAB does not allow for the processing of a corpus (a collection of texts selected for analysis) exceeding 30Mb, equal to approximately 18,000 pages in American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) format.
5. Each radial diagram shows twenty-five significant words that are often associated with the keyword "bribe" appearing at the center. The distance from the center indicates the co-occurrence frequency: the closer to the center, the higher the co-occurrence. All radial diagrams are available at http://anticorrp.eu/publication_type/deliverable/.
6. This is a well-rooted feature of Italian journalism that is mostly due to its low level of professional autonomy from politics and political parties.
7. Pennisi was a Rightist politician involved in a case of corruption at Regione Lombardia (Lombardia Region). Di Caterina and Penati were connected in a scandal that involved facilitating a building license in the small city of Sesto San Giovanni near Milan. This scandal was debated across the nation because Filippo Penati, the former mayor of Sesto San Giovanni, was the assistant of the Partito Democratico (PD) leader Pierluigi Bersani.
8. On the agent/client relationship, see Szàntò et al. (2012). These authors describe the corruption transaction according to the principal-agent approach, which is based on an interpretative scheme originally formulated by Rose-Ackerman (1978) and Lambsdorff (2007).
9. "Bunga Bunga" is the name given to the parties organized by Berlusconi at which young women were present, most prominently the underage Karima El Mahroug (Ruby). Berlusconi was charged with exploitation of underage prostitution and solicitation after he pressured a policeman to free the young girl, Ruby, who had been arrested for theft.
10. Niccolò Ghedini is Berlusconi's lawyer. David Mills is a British lawyer accused of perjury in favor of Berlusconi. Ruby is the well-known name of an underage girl who attended Berlusconi's parties.
11. These names (Table 2 and Figure 2) are connected with other corruption scandals in the Regione Lombardia (Lombardia Region).
12. Most of the members of Parliament (MP) involved in the scandal were forced to reimburse the amount that they employed incorrectly; some were accused of "false accounting." In other countries, such as Italy, they would have been charged with embezzlement.
13. Most of these cases concern business companies that are investigated or sentenced for having paid foreign public officials to sell their products. For example, Siemens was accused of having paid bribes to obtain contracts in various foreign countries, and the French company Thales was investigated with allegations of having paid bribes to sell armaments to the South African government.
14. "Petty corruption" is used to indicate cases of corruption that involve small amounts of money and low- to midlevel public officials in interaction with ordinary citizens.
15. Compared with the other British newspapers (and with most Italian and French news outlets), *The Sun* publishes a substantially smaller number of articles that contain at least one of our corruption-related keywords. The number of analyzed articles per British newspaper was as follows: *The Sun* 3,695; *The Guardian* 13,386; *The Times* 12,122; *The Financial Times* 7,978; for France: *Le Monde* 9,632; *Le Figaro* 6,665; *Ouest France* 3,662; *Les Echos* 3,871; for Italy: *La Repubblica* 16,561; *Corriere della Sera* 13,420; *Il Giornale* 8,265; *Il Sole 24 Ore* 7,993.
16. In the 2012 to 2013 period, *The Sun* used the word "FA" 141 of the 400 times this acronym occurred in the four analyzed British newspapers (35.3 percent of total occurrences; chi-square test value: 419.5). Considering that the number of *The Sun*'s articles that were analyzed is substantially smaller than that of the other three newspapers, the data on the

words overused by the British tabloid have high statistical significance. The data on other words overused by *The Sun* during the 2012 to 2013 period are as follows: "league" (19.8 percent of 1,721 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 342.7), "match-fixing" (27.9 percent of 452 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 253.6), "sport" (13.4 percent of 4,121 total occurrences; chi-square test value: 183.1).

17. For example, *The Financial Times*, *Les Echos*, and *Il Sole 24 Ore* overuse general words (e.g., "company," "business," "bank," "market") and specific words (e.g., "Siemens," "Finmeccanica," "BAE"), which indicate a strong focus on the private business sector and companies involved in corruption cases.
18. In the 2008 to 2011 period, *Il Giornale* used the word "Di Pietro" 1,113 of the 3,526 total number of times it occurred in all four analyzed Italian newspapers (31.6 percent of total quotations; chi-square test value: 619.7) and the word "Travaglio" 251 out of the 444 total occurrences (56.5 percent; chi-square test value: 535.0).
19. Businessman and Gaullist politician Charles Pasqua was the Interior Minister during the Chirac and Balladur governments. He was involved in several French political scandals, such as the Sofemi affair, the Annemasse casino case, and the Alstom affair. In particular, in 2004, he was involved in the UN "Oil for Food" scandal. During the 2004 to 2007 period, *Le Monde* used the name "Pasqua" 286 of the total 467 times the name occurred in the four analyzed French newspapers (61.2 percent of total quotations; chi-square test value: 100.8).
20. Jean-Noël Guérini is a Socialist politician who was involved in a corruption scandal. From 2008 to 2011, *Le Figaro* used the word "Guérini" 206 of the 431 times this name occurred in the four analyzed French newspapers (47.8 percent of total occurrences; chi-square test value: 81.0).

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Political Contest and Oppositional Voices in Postconflict Democracy: The Impact of Institutional Design on Government–Media Relations

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Abstract

This article investigates how political institutions affect government–media relationships. Most studies of media-politics focus on majoritarian parliamentary or presidential systems and on how party systems affect journalism. This tends to neglect important issues that pertain in more constitutionally complex democracies, such as the consociational institutions in postconflict societies. Taking the Northern Irish context as a strategic case study, we analyze data from thirty-three semistructured interviews with the actors responsible for communicating political issues in Northern Ireland: political journalists and the two groups of government communicators, civil service Government Information Officers (GIOs) and Ministerial Special Advisers (SpAds). By examining their roles and relationships in this context, we demonstrate the importance of considering the institutional design of the democratic system itself when attempting to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced theory of media-politics. In Northern Ireland, the absence of an official political opposition in the legislature, together with the mandatory nature of the multiparty coalition, means that the media have come to be perceived by many political and media actors as the opposition. This in turn influences the interpersonal interactions between government and media, the way political actors try to "manage" the media, and the media's approach to reporting government.

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government, journalism, peace, political conflict, public sphere, democracy

Introduction

The media are considered to play a crucial democratic role in the public sphere through representing political issues to the public (Gelders et al. 2007); facilitating deliberation, public opinion formation, and political participation (Habermas [1962] 1989); acting as the “watchdog” of powerful societal institutions (Norris 2000); and in assisting in the development of civil society in politically fragile and divided contexts (Taylor 2000). Journalists are expected to perform their news reporting within the framework of public interest values, such as objectivity, impartiality, public service, autonomy, and a critical questioning of power (Street 2001). However, it is acknowledged that political, cultural, organizational, economic, and relational factors affect this journalistic ideal (Davis 2010). In deeply divided, postconflict societies, ethnopolitical antagonisms are fundamental to almost all aspects of civic life, yet there is limited research into how government–media relations operate in such contexts. Most media-politics studies focus on Western majoritarian parliamentary or presidential systems—that is, any system that has clear “winners” and “losers” after elections—and where institutional factors are considered, the focus is largely on how party systems affect journalism (e.g., Çarkoğlu et al. 2014; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009). This focus, however, neglects important institutional variables, such as mandatory coalition, proportionality, and special cross-community voting arrangements, which pertain in more constitutionally complex democracies and which may have a significant impact on media-politics relations.

A good example of such complexity is the consociational institutions designed to encourage postconflict democratization in Northern Ireland. However, although relatively unusual in Western societies, it should be noted that Northern Ireland is not as unique in this regard as one might think. For example, since 1989, eighty-two peace agreements across twenty sub-Saharan countries have included provisions for consociational power-sharing institutions (Aroussi et al. 2013). Consociationalism has also been central to the political system in divided societies such as Bosnia, Macedonia, Switzerland, Belgium, Iraq, Nigeria, Lebanon, and South Africa. Thus, we use contemporary Northern Ireland as a strategic case study to investigate how consociational political institutions affect the roles and relationships of the actors responsible for communicating political issues in nonmajoritarian democracies. We analyze data from thirty-three semistructured interviews with political journalists and the two key groups of government communicators in the Northern Ireland political system, civil service Government Information Officers (GIOs) and Ministerial Special Advisers (SpAds). By examining government–media relations in this context, we demonstrate the importance of considering the *institutional design* of the democratic system, rather than just “party systems” when attempting to develop a comprehensive, internationally applicable theory of media-politics. By “institutional design,” we refer to “the mix of institutional structures and processes . . . [developed] in order to avoid democratic perversions" (Olsen 1997: 223).

Political Contest, Party Systems, and the Media

It is commonly accepted that the media can shape, rather than merely reflect, the political agenda (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). This is because, as scholars have noted, in many Western polities, the media can be understood as a political institution in their own right, in the sense that they can "create a picture of political reality that categorizes and directs political action" (Sparrow 2006: 150). This relationship is nonetheless complex in that while the media operate according to their own standard practices, routines, and institutional pressures, they are simultaneously in close collaboration with political institutions (through interdependent source-media relations), making these institutional boundaries more fluid (Cook 2006).

Wolfsfeld's (1997) political contest model illuminates how political dynamics shape a society's political journalism. Put simply, the theory "attempts to move away from more media-centric approaches in political communication by emphasizing the ways in which the political environment has a dominating influence on how the news media cover political actors and events" (Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009: 149). However, Wolfsfeld's argument is not that political processes influence a passive media; the agency and influence of media actors must also be recognized. Wolfsfeld (2004) used the model as a lens through which to analyze the Northern Ireland peace process. His study explored the largely supportive role of the media in the Northern Ireland peace process, in contrast with the antagonistic and arguably destructive role of the media in the Israel–Palestine peace process. His analysis concluded that a combination of the impact of elite consensus or dissensus, journalistic norms, and the level of societal violence and polarization explains the role that the media played in each political context. Sheafer and Wolfsfeld (2009) contend that long-term structural and cultural differences are an important indicator of the role that "oppositional voices" play across political environments. In particular, they argue that in multiparty/polarized societies (e.g., Israel), as opposed to two-party systems (e.g., the United States), the media will provide more room for "oppositional voices." The presumption here is that "the greater the number and span of political parties, the more we would expect the news media to be open to a variety of dissenting voices, including those coming from extra-parliamentary actors" (Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009: 149). Their work adds a useful amendment to Bennett's (1990) "indexing hypothesis," which envisages little space in the mainstream media for oppositional voices from extra-parliamentary actors outside mainstream political elites.

In research exploring how political and media systems interact, a significant amount of attention has been paid to analyzing how different party systems and media systems affect political communication. One of the main reference points for this work is Hallin and Mancini's (2004) "Three Models of Media and Politics," based on the Mediterranean, Northern/Central European, and the North Atlantic experience, respectively—the "Polarized Pluralist," "Democratic Corporatist," and the "Liberal" models. Hallin and

Mancini (2004) distinguish these models based on four dimensions: the structure of media markets, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and the role of the state.

While broadly useful in explaining media-politics relations, significant limitations with their approach have been highlighted, most importantly, that many countries display elements of more than one model or even all three (Hadland 2011). Significantly, while the "nature of the state" and "the development of civil society" is highlighted as crucial to understanding the role of the news media, there is little reflection on the purposeful design of state institutions. Instead, there is a focus on how much the state intervenes in media systems through laws, ownership, or funding, albeit according to historical and social developments, or the role of party systems (i.e., number of parties, degree of polarization) in explaining similarities and differences between country case studies. More recently, Hallin and Mancini (2011) themselves have acknowledged that their previous work

> deals with only a limited number of types of party systems, excluding, among others, all forms of noncompetitive systems . . . Such a case clearly requires a different conceptualization of the relation of media and politics than anything we develop in *Comparing Media Systems*. (Hallin and Mancini 2011: 294)

It is also clear that different cultural and political environments affect a region's political journalism in different ways (Avraham 2003; Donsbach and Patterson 2004). For example, Taylor's research has outlined how the media has been used by governments in a diplomatic capacity, building alliances to encourage nation building within divided or conflict afflicted societies such as Kosovo and Bosnia (Taylor 2000). Uribe's (2013) work on Chile has shown that during its democratic transition, government communication was used to promote national unity, stability, and civil liberties, with the media being largely supportive of this aim. He traces the different phases of government–media relations as democracy stabilized in the country and government communication became more presidential, better resourced, and the media more critical of government. This suggests that, in postconflict political contexts, how the constitutional arrangements can affect government–media relations is an area worth exploring. Indeed, there have been calls for more attention to *government systems* rather than just focusing on party systems (De Albuquerque 2011). Furthermore, the variables that pertain in consensus style democracies, such as centralization or decentralization, have been specified as providing potentially significant revisions to Hallin and Mancini's models (Humphreys 2012). Therefore, it is imperative for greater understanding and theoretical development to investigate government–media relations in a context where party systems are not necessarily the defining institutional characteristic. Investigating a consociational government system offers such an opportunity.

Consociational Government

Lijphart (2008) observes that to ensure sociopolitical stability in deeply divided, postconflict societies, specific types of constitutional architecture tend to be embedded in peace agreements. Typically, these include *grand coalitions* between the main groups/communities; *mutual veto* meaning a simple majority is never enough in decision-making processes to guarantee widespread confidence in emerging civic institutions[1]; and *proportionality* to ensure fair representation for all sides in key societal institutions, such as political office, the civil service, the police, and so on. It is acknowledged that power sharing is a useful measure at least in the short term to end violence (Samuels 2009), enabling a coexistence of different societal groups (Le Van 2011). However, Lijphart (1999) would go further and contend that consociational democracy is a "kinder," "gentler" form of democracy that encourages deliberation and compromise between divided groups, vital for postconflict cohabitation. For example, it has been argued that consociationalism can lead to greater overall equality in societies, a greater satisfaction with the democratic system, and a higher quality of democracy (Norris 2005). Conversely, there are significant criticisms of consociationalism. One central criticism concerns elite cooperation and the fact that political elites themselves are often a catalyst in political and societal divisions by making social, ethnic, or religious divisions "salient" (Andeweg 2000). Other criticisms are directed at consociational mechanisms and design. For example, the inclusive nature of consociationalism is said to limit the accountability of the political parties in power as "inclusion alters direct relationships between citizens and politicians by reducing the ability of voters to punish or reward performance" (Le Van 2011: 39). In the next sections, we briefly explain some of the implications of consociational institutional design for the governance of Northern Ireland and, in addition, contextualize the political and media background.

The Northern Ireland Context

Following thirty years of political conflict over its constitutional status, Northern Ireland has, for almost the past two decades, been governed by all of the mainstream political parties in a consociational system. There is no provision for an official opposition in the 1998 constitutional settlement that ended the long ethnopolitical conflict between Unionists/Protestants and Nationalists/Catholics.[2] Northern Ireland established a mandatory coalition government from 1998 to 2016 consisting of four, then five, political parties from across the political and constitutional spectrum, all of whom held ministerial cabinet responsibilities.

Governance in Northern Ireland has several distinctive features. First, it is a devolved polity, with many responsibilities of government "redistributed" from Westminster to the national/regional[3] legislature. Second, it operates on a mandatory consociational power-sharing basis—the governing coalition is comprised of the major political parties from across the political divide.[4] Third, there is no provision for any parliamentary speaking time, nor any access to funding for an official opposition party under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.[5] Lastly, the postconflict context adds an additional level of complexity to the political environment.

The media context in Northern Ireland also has some important distinguishing features. The main broadcast outlets are *BBC Northern Ireland*, *Ulster Television*, and several independent radio channels; these organizations strive for impartiality in their news coverage of Northern Ireland and promote themselves as serving the whole population (Unionist/British and Nationalist/Irish). However, of the three national daily newspapers, only *The Belfast Telegraph* positions itself to appeal to both communities in Northern Ireland. The *Irish News* targets the Nationalist community while the *News Letter* is staunchly Unionist in its outlook, and this long-standing "political parallelism" (Hallin and Mancini 2004) is also a feature of the local press. At the same time, the key constitutional and institutional changes identified above mean that political journalism has changed over the past two decades. Northern Ireland journalists now cover news in a postconflict society, governed by a devolved power-sharing administration, which means that local politicians and their policies come under more scrutiny now than they have done in the past forty years (McLaughlin and Baker 2010). Despite this distinctive environment, there is remarkably little empirical research into how government and media interact in postconflict Northern Ireland. Some studies have examined the early stages of the peace process (Spencer 2000) and devolution (Fawcett 2002), but none so far have focused explicitly, as we do, on examining the link between the new political context, the institutional design of government, and the role of the media in relation to the evolving political system. Our research questions are, therefore:

Research Question 1: How does the consociational nature of government in Northern Ireland affect government–media relations?
Research Question 2: What can we learn from the impact of consociationalism on government–media relations to enable the development of a more comprehensive theory of media-politics?

Method

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed to recruit appropriate individuals for semistructured in-depth interviews. Interviews were carried out between February and May 2012. In Northern Ireland's political system (and indeed across the United Kingdom), public relations activities are managed by GIOs, civil servants whose role is to communicate government business impartially; and SpAds who are personally appointed by a departmental minister to assist him or her in a political capacity, and thus, these are the groups we included in our sample, in addition to political journalists. The sample consisted of sixteen political journalists, nine senior GIOs (69% of the total), and eight SpAds (42% of the total), thirty-three interviewees in total. The journalists who participated were from the main press and broadcast organizations in Northern Ireland, and all were at section editor or overall editor level. All GIOs interviewed held the rank of principal information officer in the civil service and, as with the SpAds who participated, worked across a number of different government departments for all five coalition government partners. All participants were offered interviewee anonymity, and all selected this option. The analytical framework adopted in this study was interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which gives primacy to the perceptions of respondents, as the objective is to generate knowledge in relation to their lived experience of a phenomenon (Langdridge 2007). While we have a large amount of rich empirical data from the interviews, space restrictions require us be selective in presenting our findings and analysis. Thus, we report and analyze the themes that recurred most frequently across participant groups. In our findings, representative quotations have been edited (to remove repetitions, stutters, and nonverbal sounds) for ease of understanding.

Findings and Analysis

A number of generic themes emerged from our data in relation to the working relationships of journalists with GIOs and SpAds. There is evidence of the "traditional" tensions and mutual stereotyping, contest and reciprocity, between journalists and government communicators identified in much previous research within Western political systems. Many of our journalist participants described an increasingly challenging working environment, due to technological change and cuts in their resources, while government public relations resources increased. Aside from these issues, we highlight four key themes articulated frequently by our interviewees. These themes merit deeper analysis if we are to develop a more comprehensive theory of media-politics that includes the constitutionally complex, democratic society represented by the Northern Ireland case. These themes of course overlap, but for the purposes of the section "Findings and Analysis," we hold them conceptually apart to draw out some of the theoretical implications, which we will return to in the sections "Discussion" and "Conclusion."

The Role of the Journalist in a Deeply Divided Society

In line with much of the previous research findings on journalism's professional ideology, the journalists we interviewed articulated perspectives on their "role," which tended to revolve around normative ideals. They identified public service as a fundamental aspect of their profession. That is, the journalist plays the role of a "disseminator" of objective and impartial information, a "mobilizer" of civic activity, an "adversarial" critic of institutions, an "investigator" of officialdom, and a truth seeker (Tandoc et al. 2012: 8). One journalist summed up the views of many of our interviews by saying,

> there's a certain sort of service element you just tell the public what's going on but, it's also to provide analysis, to say . . . here's where they [government ministers] are contradicting each other . . . the people who make the big decisions we've gotta hold them accountable . . . show the public what they are really like. (J5)

Most of the journalists interviewed articulated this "watchdog" or "fourth estate" (Davis 2007; Norris 2000) role of journalism, and many argued that "aggressive" styles of reporting were quite legitimate (Deuze 2005: 447), linking the notion of impartiality and an "adversarial" attitude toward political figures to the need to maintain the trust of their audience.

The concept of press impartiality does, however, pose a dilemma for some newspaper journalists working in Northern Ireland. Many scholars (e.g., Armoudian 2015) have noted how in Western-style professional journalism, extreme portrayals of “the out-group” or “the others” are usually filtered through journalism norms and structures, including the idea of impartiality, so that the tone is softened and the language rendered more neutral. However, during violent conflicts, “journalists tend to focus on the most violent events and reinforce identities, demarcating ‘us’ from ‘them’ and cover the ‘others’ based upon ‘their’ impact on ‘us,’ while ignoring ‘our’ impact on ‘them,’ which exacerbates hatred between foes” (Armoudian 2015: 361). In Northern Ireland, the forces of political ideology and identity politics still powerfully influence working practices in the postconflict phase. One newspaper journalist explained, “We’ve very strong political coverage and . . . obviously have a very predominantly unionist readership, and we would address that readership. So you know our focus would be very much on unionist politics and the unionist perspective on things” (J1). For many newspaper journalists in Northern Ireland, it is clear that Van Dijk’s (1988) analysis holds true, the news stories they write “reflect the class, gender and ethnic position of the journalists” (155). This press partisanship is acknowledged by GIOs and SpAds and incorporated into their public relations (PR) activities. One GIO stated, “the Irish News isn’t gonna take a story about Ulster Scots, it’s not their readership, the News Letter isn’t gonna take a story about GAA, it’s not their readership. So, it’s just being aware of that” (G5). Overall, our findings suggest it is much easier for broadcast journalists, than for newspaper journalists, to prioritize the norm of impartiality; indeed, many of them work for media organizations (e.g., BBC, ITV) whose mission statements explicitly include and reinforce this concept. For most newspaper journalists, the sociopolitical environment comprising the two separate (Unionist and Nationalist) “spheres of legitimacy” (Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009) have an impact on their journalistic role and their professional behavior, meaning they adapt their professional ideology to the particular political and professional context in which they operate (Vos 2013).

The Legacy of Violent Ethnopolitical Conflict on Journalists and News Values

Media negativity and an overconcentration on “soft” political issues or scandal instead of serious policy issues is a frequent complaint of political actors across democratic societies (McNair 2000). In Northern Ireland, these kinds of complaints are articulated but framed differently because of the recent historical context. When asked about their views on the political journalists working in Northern Ireland, some of the GIOs, and the majority of SpAds we interviewed, agreed that most of the journalists they encountered had been, as one SpAd put it, “shaped by the conflict” (S3). Another SpAd commenting on political journalists, said,

> They don’t understand policy issues, and in many cases don’t want to understand them . . . the media have had bombs and bullets and paramilitaries and gangsters and conflict, and they’re struggling to get to deal with the detail of policy and normal stuff. (S8)

This assumption that journalists are overly fixated on constitutional issues and political disputes instead of important policy issues was repeatedly articulated by SpAds. One explained, "there's criticism . . . that they [the political elites] don't talk about bread and butter policies but whenever you hold a press conference . . . on some matter of detailed policy, the press don't cover it" (S2). GIOs and SpAds considered this media focus to be particularly detrimental both to the image of politics in postconflict Northern Ireland and to the positive concrete progress being made by Northern Ireland's power-sharing government. For example, one GIO stated,

> the media, don't seem to take their responsibility in a democratic society seriously . . . in order for a democracy to work, people have to vote for the people they think are going to represent them as best they can, so they might base that one decision every four years on something that they read, and if that is over-sensationalized, unfair or untrue, that could be the difference in that person voting for a different party, not placing their vote at all, being utterly apathetic. (G2)

Wolfsfeld (2004) suggests that positive political progress in deeply divided societies is not always considered newsworthy by journalists because they are trained to value immediacy, drama, simplicity, and ethnocentrism. The consequence of this, according to Wolfsfeld, is that journalists devote more attention to reporting political conflict than peace, even though they may, as individuals, value peace. Most journalists we interviewed did acknowledge the important influence the conflict had had on them professionally, but most insisted that their journalistic priorities had moved on since a relatively stable power-sharing government had emerged over the previous decade. In a view that was typical, one argued,

> up until about five or six years ago, we were fixated by politics and violence, now the news agenda has changed dramatically . . . journalists are paying far more attention to the social issues, health, welfare and you know jobs, the economy, education and general well-being . . . So it's things that matter in day to day life . . . most people . . . they just want to get on with their lives . . . we have to reflect that. (J10)

At the same time, several journalists insisted that the slow pace of political progress and continual sectarian disputes often fuelled the media's focus on politically controversial issues. In this sense, the political agenda-setting power lies with the politicians. One journalist stated bluntly, "instead of addressing [an issue] on an intra-community basis, it's addressed on a [Unionist or Nationalist] community basis . . . More often than not . . . the politicos are the people who are perpetuating that dark past" (J14).

The Impact of New Democratic Institutions on Political Communication

Many of the journalists we interviewed referred to what they perceived to be the detrimental impact of Northern Ireland's new institutional structures on the flow of information from government to the media. One direct impact of consociationalism has been to greatly strengthen political party control over government departments, turning them into *de facto* party "fiefdoms" (Wilford 2007) ruled by the minister and his or her advisers. Interviewees from all groups agreed that there is a lack of trust from political parties toward the civil service that has resulted in GIOs losing influence over government communication and greatly increasing the control and status of SpAds. A journalist explained that,

> the government end of things in Northern Ireland is very much second fiddle to the parties . . . we are a highly politicized system of government here . . . They [the parties] only trust their own people really and run their own ships really strictly. (J16)

Another journalist specifically pointed out how this had affected GIOs,

> one of the big differences that we've seen with devolution, with local parties taking over and because of the nature of the government that we have, is that . . . this is a politically driven government whereas previously it was a kind of administration that was largely driven by the civil service. (J7)

The result of this is that SpAds, with more "inside" knowledge on political issues, are often journalists' preferred sources. One journalist noted, "when you're speaking to the Special Adviser you know you're speaking to the minister . . . they can be more helpful in sort of steering you to stories" (J13). Journalists realize that, in the current structure, GIOs have to "clear" information with SpAds before they can disseminate it to journalists, and indeed many commented on GIOs' resentment of SpAd involvement in departmental communication decisions. Several journalists also noted the dangers in this situation because it was restricting their access to information, as one recalled,

> recently we were blocked by . . . [names political party] SpAds, a straightforward press enquiry was held up for twelve days because the civil service press officer had to get clearance to release information . . . the Freedom of Information request subsequently showed that the SpAd had vetoed the release of the piece. (J15)

SpAds, when questioned about the changes in government communication since the development of devolved consociational government, suggested that the new structures discourage collective government responsibility and encourage competition between ministers from rival parties. They also acknowledged that this can affect both the autonomy of GIOs and their ability to develop a coherent cross-government information dissemination strategy. One SpAd observed,

> the will of the ministers will always overrule this central [government communication] mechanism, which means that you could in any one day have a situation where government could be making three or four very important announcements and they all clash . . . a lot of them [ministers] try and get the best piece of PR for themselves . . . rather than looking at the Executive as a whole. (S6)

SpAds and GIOs agreed that this "silo mentality" (S6) was a by-product of the consociational political structure, which has encouraged the interdepartmental competition between ministers to infiltrate departmental information dissemination. One GIO articulated a common complaint: "I'm competing with ten or eleven other departments, to try and get my stuff in the papers" (G3). This point was corroborated by several journalists, with one noting of the government's central communication arm: "the Executive Information Service is a mirror image of the very monolithic, compulsory coalition that we have" (J15). Another explained that, increasingly, a large amount of a GIO's time,

> is devoted to protecting their minister and protecting their department at all costs . . . Even though, they [GIOs] at each department are paid out of public funds to supposedly just communicate with the public, very often they'll be at open warfare with each other. (J4)

The noted lack of collective cabinet responsibility among ministers is a particular problem for government communication (Rice and Somerville 2013). As Birrell explains, this stems from mandatory coalition:

> After the 1998 Agreement, there was no legal requirement or guidance laid down that decision making would operate on a formal basis of collective responsibility . . . without collective responsibility ministers were [and are] able to disagree in public, in the Assembly and its committees and in the media, both with the declared Executive policy and with other ministers . . . with no consequences for their place in government. (Birrell 2012: 55)

McEvoy (2006) further notes that, "As ministers are simply nominated by their parties rather than being appointed by a prime minister and they are not subject to parliamentary ramification, they owe their allegiance to their party" (p.459). This has led to increasing party political (rather than government) control over departmental communication with overall negative consequences for media access to transparent information. The result is that relationships between government communicators and the media have become in many cases more antagonistic and less conducive to fulfilling democratic norms of public service and transparency.

The Media as the Unofficial Political Opposition

A strong consensus exists among political journalists and, indeed, among many SpAds and GIOs that political communication in Northern Ireland tends to be negative and antagonistic. As noted above, the political structures and recent political history play a role in this; even though they are in government together, parties also act in an oppositional capacity to some extent. Arguably, this is partly because maintaining difference and distinct identities from other governing parties through the designation mechanism is considered by many to be essential for their very survival in the consociational system. Indeed, it is clear that in Northern Ireland, ". . . formalized divisions of power along identity or ethnic lines . . . may have the perverse effect of entrenching the ethnic and divisive positions that have fuelled the conflict" (Samuels 2009: 182). But while oppositional voices within the multiparty coalition government are reported in the media, the lack of an *official* opposition is a significant feature of the political environment much commented on by all participant groups in this study. It is an issue that creates a dilemma for the media, because reporting friction inside the Northern Ireland government is one thing, finding coherent opposition voices to the governing administration has been much more difficult.

A crucial theme that emerged from this situation was a strong criticism of political journalists, by GIOs and particularly SpAds, for being overly cynical toward the political class, and, indeed, for adopting an "opposition" role. A typical comment along these lines was,

> the press here, because there's no formal opposition at Stormont, probably take the view that they effectively are the opposition . . . which can be a bit damaging for the political process. In the UK as a whole, you would have some of the large national papers be broadly sympathetic to one party, some sympathetic to another, most of them are just generally hostile here. (S2)

Davis (2009) notes that political actors sometimes make similar comments in the U.K. Westminster context, and McNair (2000) suggests that the media may assume this role in light of ineffective political opposition. However, the fact that for the past two decades, Northern Ireland's constitutional settlement actually permitted no official opposition party means that media "opposition" to the government is of a different order or is certainly widely perceived to be of a different order. This represents a fairly dramatic shift for the media in the current postconflict context because, initially, the mainstream press were very supportive of the implementation of the power-sharing system (Baker 2005; Wolfsfeld 2004). This is also an interesting development because it appears to distinguish the role of the media in Northern Ireland's consociational political system from other polarized/multiparty (but majoritarian) systems where the media report a wide range of oppositional voices (Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009). It is fair to say that, in recent times, the media have been the consistent *external* critical voice on government and, therefore, can at times seem to play the role of a quasi-opposition party (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2010). Certainly, they have come to be viewed as *the* opposition by many government actors.

The journalists we interviewed articulated a range of views on this issue. Some did feel, given the structure of Northern Ireland's political system, that "opposition" was an important aspect of their professional role. One journalist commented, "I think most journalists would see their role as, probably being in opposition actually . . . there's obviously not an opposition here at the moment politically . . . it is very important to have someone who's asking questions and not just accepting everything that's said" (J4). Another specifically identified the consociational institutional design, noting, "particularly given the nature of our political arrangements at Stormont where there isn't an official opposition to scrutinize things, I think the media has a certain role to play there" (J1). Another agreed, "the system of government here is a coalition of five parties, in many ways the media has to be the opposition . . . that's a good thing . . . you don't actually have an official opposition here so that makes it even more important" (J11). Nevertheless, others stated that this was absolutely not their responsibility: "all this crap that journalism has become the opposition, that's a ridiculous notion, nobody elected us . . . it is our job to ask the awkward questions but you know, it's not our job to formulate alternative policies" (J16). It should be noted that there are important differences in how "opposition" is being defined by different interviewees. For example, opposition seems to be understood as "hostility" by one journalist (J2), while others refer to it as "scrutiny" (J4 and J1), and for the journalist just quoted (J16), "opposition" entails proposing alternative policies. One journalist reflected on the perceptions that may exist among government actors,

> sometimes they'll probably see you as that [the opposition] simply by virtue of the fact that you're challenging them but . . . it's not that we're challenging them from a political point of view, we're challenging them to justify their actions, and that's our job on behalf of our audience . . . that's a function of a democracy and I think it's a pretty important one. (J7)

Overall, regarding the design of Northern Ireland's democratic system, all of our participant groups voiced considerable frustration with its impact on political debate. One SpAd summed up the broad consensus among the majority of SpAds, GIOs, and journalists that a more traditional political system would lead to better governance, as well as better government and media communication,

> ultimately I suppose it has to go to government and opposition, that's normal and that works, it's been proven to be effective and then maybe that brings the journalists along better . . . journalists start to see there's two different views—there's the government view and the opposition view—and they get public debate going in a more substantial way. (S8)

A move to a traditional government-opposition (and particularly a majoritarian) system is, of course, risky in a postconflict society. It means winners and losers, but it would perhaps help facilitate spaces for political voices, and, therefore, media coverage, outside of the narrow Unionist/Nationalist constitutional debates. This in turn may lead to opportunities to develop capacity for deliberative debates about policy alternatives, a normative objective of the democratic opposition role (Wilford 2010).

Discussion

In some respects, the results of our research echo the findings of previous academic studies on government-media relationships characterized by control, contest, reciprocity, trust, and distrust (Davis 2010; Larsson 2002). However, one might reasonably expect from comparative systems studies, or Lijphart's (1999) theory of "gentle" consociational democracy, that the multiparty polarized consociational system in Northern Ireland would enable broader sources of political information for the media, stimulate greater deliberation and consensus building within government, and produce a broader range of oppositional voices in the media, but we find this is not the case. It is clear that far from providing more "room" for oppositional voices, the Northern Ireland media focus on reporting, albeit frequently negatively, designated Unionist or Nationalist elite voices within the confines of existing "institutional power blocs" (Bennett 1990), with little attention paid to extra-parliamentary oppositional voices. Our study, therefore, challenges much of the theorizing of government–media relations that focuses on party systems, and produced three main findings.

First, the mandatory nature of coalition in Northern Ireland means that relations between the parties of government are particularly antagonistic and distrustful. The fact that government departments have become party fiefdoms has greatly strengthened the power of SpAds, at the expense of GIOs, and this is reflected in the communicative relationships between all three groups. SpAds are integral in facilitating their political party's permanent campaigning, constantly promoting their party agenda to the media within the governing grand coalition. The result is that there is no coherent or collective message communicated to the media about most *government* decision making or policy, and the information they do receive is filtered through a partisan lens.

Second, the lack of an official political opposition within the consociational system means that there is no clear political oppositional voice for the media to report. Instead, opposition to government policy is either ubiquitous within government or internalized among private interparty negotiations, reducing debate and deliberation in the public sphere. For many participants across all our interview groups, the media, increasingly a consistent critic of Northern Ireland governance, are considered to be the main extra-parliamentary dissenting voice (Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009). This arguably diminishes the media's normative ability to be an effective critical watchdog of government that is respected by political actors and clearly has ramifications for the trust between government sources and journalists and the management and flow of information from government to the media and, ultimately, to the public. The deterioration in media-politics relationships since the early years of the peace process (e.g., Wolfsfeld 2004) reflects one of the negative impacts of implementing mandatory consociationalism as a long-term solution to conflict (Rothchild and Roeder 2005).

Third, the fact that Northern Ireland's power-sharing arrangement requires politicians and parties to designate themselves as "Unionist" or "Nationalist" in the legislature means it is in their interests for parties to perpetuate this division to retain their share of political power. Division is institutionalized in the consociational system, and this is reflected in both the expectation from the media to have a Unionist and Nationalist "side" to a story and by their focus on political conflict over policy issues. Thus, the divisive and often sectarian discourse of Northern Ireland politics is reproduced in the media, and this arguably preserves the political parallelism of the press. Indeed, our findings demonstrate that for some newspaper journalists, impartiality and objectivity are concepts that are filtered through a partisan viewpoint where loyalty to one's ethically segmented audience is of central importance. In this sense, our study highlights some of the complexities of the journalist's role vis-à-vis government communication in a deeply divided postconflict society, supporting the work of others in this area (e.g., Avraham 2003).

All of this leads to a political context where negative political discourse dominates the public sphere, deep societal division is solidified rather than addressed, and government–media relations are largely antagonistic in character. This kind of political communication does not represent the interests of those citizens who do not identify with Unionist or Nationalist identities—or arguably even those who do—and is thus contrary to the ideals of consensus or multiparty systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004). This is not to say that reciprocity does not develop in government–media relations in Northern Ireland at times, or that the media do not play an important role in challenging government; they do, but they tend to avoid challenging the underlying ethnopolitical tensions that the consociational government is designed to ameliorate. On balance, political communication in Northern Ireland is contrary to the ethos of consociational government and like this *because* of the particular form of consociational design of government, which embodies the postconflict context.

Future research will need to explore the impact of recent changes to the Northern Ireland government. During the drafting of this article, the government passed an "Opposition Bill" to make provision for an official opposition within the Assembly.[6] However, the consociational guarantees remain in place (there is still a "grand coalition," mutual veto rights, and proportionality based on ethnopolitical identities), which means that the nature of the parliamentary "opposition" is still limited within the consociational framework. Nonetheless, comparing our current findings with what might develop in the future with this particular form of official opposition is an exciting future research opportunity.

Conclusion

Our paper makes an important contribution to media-politics theory building in the following ways. We demonstrate that while consociational institutions are designed to accommodate the polarized interests within a postconflict society, and to encourage deliberation and enhance democratization, the kind of multiparty systems this constitutional architecture produces can actually be detrimental for political communication and government–media relations. This has broader relevance for scholars working in this field who have largely discussed differences in media-politics interactions at the level of political party systems (e.g., Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2009). It is clear that the "party system" is too crude a variable to explain the media's role in complex political cultures including consociational democracies. We suggest that in such democracies, there are a number of key variables affecting political communication and government–media relations. These are whether coalition formation is on a voluntary or mandatory basis, the presence or absence of an official political opposition, and whether ethnopolitical or religious designation characterizes a parliamentary system—thereby reducing the range of legitimate "voices." More empirical research in other consociational contexts is required to develop the evidence base but our study indicates that the notion that multiparty political systems lead to a greater diversity of "voices" and increased open spaces for critique in the media's political coverage is overly simplistic. Our research also demonstrates that an institutional design that is "good" for building postconflict democracy can, in the longer term, be detrimental to developing normative ideals of government–media relations. We support the call for different approaches to media-politics analyses that give more credence to the impact of particular institutional features and processes on this relationship (Humphreys 2012; Roudakova 2011). The institutional design variables we identify will assist in producing more nuanced and comprehensive accounts of media-politics across the varied and complex political environments in contemporary societies.

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Notes

1. In Northern Ireland, this includes the "petition of concern" that, if brought forward by a party in the Assembly, means that a vote will only be passed through the Assembly if supported by a weighted majority of members designated as both Unionist and Nationalist, and thus is often used to "veto" the passing of legislation.
2. For a fuller explanation, see Roche and Barton (2013).
3. Unionists like to refer to Northern Ireland as one of the "nations" that make up the United Kingdom while Irish Republicans view it as a "region" of Ireland. Many institutions get round this issue by referring to the entity as a "national region."
4. At the time of writing this article, the following political parties held ministerial posts in the governing administration: *The Democratic Unionist Party* (DUP; British Unionist), *Sinn Fein* (Irish Republican), *The Social Democratic Labour Party* (SDLP; Irish Nationalist), the *Ulster Unionist Party* (UUP; British Unionist), and the *Alliance Party* (cross-community).
5. This is correct at the time of writing this article, however, elections have recently taken place (May 2016) and an "Opposition Bill" to make provision for an official opposition has been passed within the Assembly. An official opposition now exists; however, the constitutional arrangement with its consociational guarantees remains in place (as outlined in our sections "Discussion" and "Conclusion").
6. The new Northern Ireland Executive comprises the DUP (largest) and Sinn Fein (second largest), together with Independent Unionist Claire Sugden as minister for justice; the SDLP and UUP are now in official opposition, with the Alliance party resuming a "backbencher" capacity after rejecting the offer of the justice ministry.

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Article

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Are Perceptions of Candidate Traits Shaped by the Media? The Effects of Three Types of Media Bias

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Abstract

Media coverage can influence how citizens think about their political leaders. This study explores how three types of media bias (visibility bias, tonality bias, and agenda bias) affect voter assessments of politicians' traits. Bias effects should be stronger for political traits (such as competence) than for nonpolitical traits (such as likability). Biases may also interact in their effects: Specifically, visibility bias should moderate the impact of tonality bias. Combining media, party, and survey data through manual content analysis of newspaper coverage (N = 2,680) and party press releases (N = 1,794), as well as a three-wave voter survey (n = 927) during the 2013 Austrian election campaign, we find substantial effects of tonality bias and agenda bias on political trait perceptions. The effects are less clear for nonpolitical trait perceptions. Although visibility bias has no direct impact, there is evidence that it moderates effects of tonality bias on candidate perceptions.

Keywords

election campaign, media bias, media effects, political perceptions

Introduction

Political competition is increasingly personalized, even in parliamentary systems that traditionally and institutionally place parties at the center. This personalization has

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been observed in terms of campaigns (e.g., Aarts et al. 2011; Garzia 2011; Karvonen 2010; Reinemann and Wilke 2007), media coverage (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; van Santen and van Zoonen 2009), and vote choice (King 2002; McAllister 2007; A.H. Miller et al. 1986; Takens et al. 2015). As few voters personally interact with leaders, their perceptions of candidates mainly result from exposure to news coverage (Bos et al. 2011), which influences their knowledge about and attitudes toward a candidate (Balmas and Sheafer 2010; Lenz and Lawson 2011).

Importantly, media effects on candidate perceptions will not be politically neutral if news coverage is politically biased, in that political candidates are presented and discussed very differently in different news outlets. Such bias is likely to be common. Although the normative ideal of objective media reporting requires that the media cover each candidate in an unbiased way (Strömbäck 2008), the implementation of this norm nonetheless varies greatly between different types of media and journalism cultures in different countries (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Hanitzsch et al. 2011).

While media bias is often treated as a single phenomenon, it is important to disaggregate it into three different subtypes: visibility bias, tonality bias, and agenda bias (Brandenburg 2005). In this study, visibility bias is based on the salience of party leaders, tonality bias on the evaluation of these candidates, and agenda bias on the extent to which they are able to address their favored issues in media coverage. Only recently have studies investigating bias effects on party preferences in multiparty systems included two (Boomgaarden and Semetko 2012; Hopmann et al. 2010) or even three types of bias (Eberl et al. 2015). Overall, most research tends to disregard agenda bias, mainly because of measurement difficulties (D'Alessio and Allen 2000), even though it potentially influences perceptions about candidates' issue positions (Brandenburg 2005) and has been shown to be a predictor of party preferences (Eberl et al. 2015). The present study asks how the three forms of media bias influence voters' perceptions of candidate traits.

In considering the effects of visibility, tonality, and agenda bias, this study makes four key contributions. First, this paper is the first to examine the distinct effects of each type of media bias on perceptions of party leaders' personality traits. Second, we explicitly consider the possibility of interactions between different types of bias, specifically, the multiplying effect of visibility bias. Third, we are the first to examine how these media bias effects may differ for two political, performance-oriented and two nonpolitical, personality-oriented candidate traits on the basis of information processing theory (Coleman and Wu 2015). Finally, our case adds to research that breaks with the analysis of media bias in two-party systems (see Hopmann et al. 2011) and can be used as a reference point for many European countries.

Our model takes advantage of an integrated research design using data from an extensive content analysis of six national newspapers as well as all press releases sent out by five parties during the 2013 Austrian national election campaign. These data are then combined with a three-wave panel survey containing detailed media exposure measures to study short-term changes in candidate trait perceptions over the last six weeks of the election campaign. In sum, we use a precise, conservative measurement of media effects that enables us to disentangle political bias effects from effects based on selective exposure or structural bias.

Overall, this study paints a comprehensive picture of candidate-based media effects during election campaigns in a European parliamentary democracy with a democratic-corporatist media system. We add substantially to the literature on bias effects of news coverage on voter perceptions of political leaders, thereby moving beyond studies on vote choice (Holbert et al. 2010: 16f). In our conclusion, we reflect on important implications of our study for future research in this core area of political communication.

Three Types of Candidate Bias

We define political media bias as the extent to which coverage of a candidate is better or worse in one outlet compared with coverage of all other candidates in that outlet and coverage of that candidate in all other outlets.[1] We distinguish three types of media bias in candidate—in our case party leader—coverage: visibility bias, tonality bias, and agenda bias.

Visibility bias exists when one party leader is the subject of an undue amount of coverage (high or low) compared with other leaders and other media outlets. It, therefore, captures whether coverage of a leader is higher or lower compared with (1) coverage of other leaders in that outlet and (2) coverage of the same leader in other outlets. Candidate visibility is important and influential because it is a necessary condition for voters to learn about candidates and their characteristics. This will influence subsequent political judgments (Boomgaarden and Semetko 2012; Kiousis and McCombs 2004; Norris et al. 1999), especially as voters infer political importance from media salience (J.M. Miller and Krosnick 2000). Kiousis (2005) finds strong correlations between U.S. presidential candidate traits as depicted in the media and their salience in public opinion. We expect this association to be causal:

> **Hypothesis 1a (H1a):** The more visible a party leader is in voters' media repertoire, the more positive their perception of that party leader's traits.

The second type of media bias concerns valence, that is, the tonality of news coverage, a specific aspect of second-level agenda setting (Becker and McCombs 1978). Positive or negative aspects of an object are highlighted in the media, increasing the salience of these evaluations in the public's mind (Druckman and Parkin 2005). Tonality bias exists when evaluations toward one candidate are systematically more or less favorable compared with (1) other candidates in the same outlet and (2) the same candidate in other outlets. We expect that,

> **Hypothesis 1b (H1b):** The more favorable the tonality toward a party leader is in voters' media repertoire, the more positive their perception of that party leader's traits.

The third type of media bias concerns issue agendas. Candidates choose their issue agenda carefully and strategically (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994). While candidates want the media to transmit this agenda, journalists are largely autonomous in selecting news stories and connecting party leaders to issues. In this sense, positive agenda bias may exist if candidates can talk about their issues and positions in the media (Brandenburg 2005); negative agenda bias is present if candidates are connected to issues they try to avoid. For example, when the economy is doing badly, opposition leaders will want to talk about the economy to prime that issue among voters (Druckman et al. 2004; Vavreck 2009). For governing parties, talking about legislation that the candidate's party just got through parliament may increase perceived assertiveness and leadership qualities. Overall, candidates will want *their* agenda (as made visible in party communication) to be reflected in the media. Hence, our third hypothesis is that,

Hypothesis 1c (H1c): The more congruent a party leader's policy agendas (in party communication and in the media) are in voters' media repertoire, the more positive their perception of that party leader's traits.

Political and Nonpolitical Candidate Traits

Our hypotheses concern how media bias in coverage affects perceptions of candidate traits. To study this question, we need a conception of what these traits are. We build on Kinder et al. (1980), Kinder (1986) and Funk (1996) and focus on four key characteristics: competence, leadership, integrity, and empathy. These character traits can further be classified into two groups: political or "role-near" traits, for example, competence and leadership, and nonpolitical or "role-distant" characteristics, for example, likability, empathy, or attractiveness (Brettschneider 2002; W.E. Miller and Shanks 1996).

We turn to dual processing theories (Chaiken 1980; Petty and Cacioppo 1986) to tentatively consider differential effects of media bias on political and nonpolitical traits. Political trait perceptions are more likely to be based on factual and more rational information, for instance, about politicians' past performance (e.g., actual policy decisions) or future plans (e.g., policy proposals) that indicate competence and leadership qualities. Such information is likely to be processed more systematically (Heuristic Systematic Model) or centrally (Elaboration Likelihood Model). Conversely, voters' perceptions of nonpolitical traits, such as attractiveness or trustworthiness, are more affective types of candidate assessment and thus based on information that is processed heuristically (HSM) or peripherally (ELM; Coleman and Wu 2015; Todorov et al. 2002). Systematic as well as heuristic information processing have been shown to foster similar agenda-setting effects. However, systematic processing is more strongly influenced by the written content of media coverage and may thus be more conducive to media bias effects, while heuristic processing generally results in more unstable effects (Boomgaarden et al. 2016; Bulkow et al. 2013). As we can only tentatively argue that the evaluation of political candidate traits may be based on systematic and that of nonpolitical traits on heuristic information processing, we pose the following research question:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Do different types of bias have similar effects on the different types of character traits?

Bias Moderating Bias

The relationships between different forms of bias remains understudied as only one or two forms of bias are investigated in most studies. However, attribute agenda-setting theory suggests a particularly close relationship between visibility and tone. On the one hand, increased salience of positive or negative depictions of a candidate should increase the accessibility of this valenced representation of the candidate in the minds of recipients (e.g., Balmas and Sheafer 2010). On the other hand, a positive or negative tonality bias that is based on relatively little coverage should have little effect on voter perceptions compared with tonality bias that is based on a relatively high amount of coverage. In other words:

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): The effect of tonality bias is positively related to visibility bias, with the effect of tonality bias at zero when visibility bias is at its lowest value.

At the same time, it may also be that the effect of media visibility depends on tonality. If both biases are positive, both their effects should theoretically be positive. However, when a polarizing candidate in a politically slanted medium gets extensive, but strongly unfavorable media attention, political psychologists would argue that negative effects outweigh the positives (Lau 1982). Politicians will try to avoid blame in media and are thus not interested in coverage (visibility) at any cost (Midtbø 2011). This means that visibility bias should not always have positive effects. Instead,

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): The effect of visibility bias is positively related to tonality bias, with the effect of visibility bias negative when tonality bias is at its lowest value and positive when tonality bias is at its highest value.

Context: The Austrian Media and Party Systems

Most studies on media bias focus on the United States, a two-party system, with only a few studies systematically analyzing bias in multiparty systems (see D'Alessio and Allen 2000 and Hopmann et al. 2011 for reviews). In the 2013 Austrian parliamentary elections, seven parties fielded candidates nationwide. While one party was voted out of the parliament, another two were voted in for the first time. This relatively large number of parties makes determining the effects of candidate media bias in a multiparty system such as Austria far from "easy" (Hopmann et al. 2011: 241).

Austria has a democratic-corporatist media system with a high press circulation, a strong public broadcasting sector (Hallin and Mancini 2004), similar in many ways to larger European countries such as Germany or Great Britain (Brüggemann et al. 2014). Newspapers are still the most important source of political information for the Austrian voter (Kritzinger et al. 2016). Media use in Austria is similar to that in many other

European countries but different from that in the United States (see Bennett and Iyengar 2008): Austrian citizens still report that they rely on traditional mass media outlets to find information about politics, although they do increasingly make use of nonmainstream news sources and information provision via social media.

A cross-national survey among journalists finds that Austria exhibits ideal-typical journalistic values concerning "non-involvement, detachment, monitoring the government, as well as providing political and interesting information to motivate the people to participate in civic activity" (Hanitzsch et al. 2011: 281). However, this does not mean that news coverage is not politically biased at all (see Eberl et al. forthcoming), but that it is a complex and not always conscious phenomenon (Hallin and Mancini 2004). In fact, political parallelism in the Austrian newspaper sector has been classified as slightly above the European average (Lelkes forthcoming: 7). We discuss the generalizability of our findings to other contexts in the conclusion.

Data and Method

The integrated design of this study combines media content, party communication, and survey data. The media analysis includes all coverage of the leaders of the five parties that were in parliament before and after the election in six newspapers (Eberl et al. 2016).[2] The data on party communication comprise all press releases sent out by the same five parties (Müller et al. 2016). To link both types of content data to a three-wave online access panel survey (Kritzinger et al. 2014), the content analysis data were split in correspondence with the survey waves into two subsets for the periods from August 19 to September 8 and from September 9 to September 29, 2013 (Election Day). The media sample contains the quality newspapers *Der Standard* and *Die Presse*, the tabloids *Kronen Zeitung* and *Österreich* as well as the midrange newspapers *Kurier* and *Kleine Zeitung*. The sample was selected on the basis of circulation figures, genre, as well as national and regional distribution. Media content was analyzed using manual content analysis of political claims in the title, lead, and first paragraph of each article (Koopmans and Statham 1999). A claim is an action or statement by an actor about a political issue and/or actor. It may include the expression of criticism or support.[3] For the following analysis, only claims by or addressed toward one of the five lead candidates were included, generating a subsample of about 2,680 articles and 13,104 claims.

Visibility Bias

The visibility of each leader is defined by the relative amount of articles in which the candidate is a speaker or an addressee in at least one of the claims included. To compare newspapers with different formats, we use outlet-specific benchmarks (Druckman and Parkin 2005; Eberl et al. 2015). Visibility bias is then computed as the deviation of each candidate's visibility from the average visibility in that outlet of the remaining four party leaders. We thus construct a benchmark for balance for each party-medium combination, leaving us with a bias measure that has a theoretical range from −1 (the candidate appears in none of the articles, while the other candidates are present in all articles) to +1 (the candidate appears in every single article, while no other candidate is covered). For example, if one candidate were to appear in 50 percent of all articles in one outlet, and all other party leaders each only appear in 35 percent of all articles in that outlet, the visibility bias of the first candidate would be +0.15 and that of all others at −0.04. This normalization procedure ensures comparability between potentially very dissimilar media formats in a multiparty setting.

Tonality Bias

We measure the tonality toward each candidate as an average based on expressions of support (+1) and criticism (−1) on the sentence level (D'Alessio and Allen 2000). Tonality bias is then computed as the deviation of each candidate's specific tonality from the average tonality of the other four candidates in that outlet. This rescaling procedure ensures comparability between outlets, as some outlets may be more critical of all candidates (van Dalen 2012). Tonality bias is standardized to a theoretical range from −1 (the candidate is evaluated only negatively, while all other candidates are evaluated only positively) to +1 (the candidate is evaluated only positively, while all other candidates are evaluated only negatively), where a party leader has a bias of 0 (balanced/neutral) when its tonality is equal to the mean tonality across the four other front-runners in that media outlet.

Agenda Bias

The operationalization of agenda bias is based on two data sources: media coverage and press releases.[4] Altogether, the five parties sent out 1,794 press releases. Agenda congruence is assessed by comparing the issues parties address in campaign communication with the issues their leading candidate addresses in media coverage. For each press release and for each candidate claim, we assigned the issue to one of fifteen issue areas.[5] Nonpolicy statements (e.g., campaigning) are not considered. This leaves us with a subsample of 2,414 candidate-issue units in media reporting and 1,517 party-issue units in party communication. Agendas were measured in terms of percentage distributions across the fifteen policy fields. To measure agenda congruence with each media outlet, we estimated bivariate correlations between party agendas in press releases and candidate agendas in media coverage (Brandenburg 2005). Finally, for each outlet, the mean agenda congruence of the four other candidates was subtracted from each candidate's agenda congruence value, where at −1, the candidate's agendas are perfectly incongruent, while those of all other candidates are mirrored perfectly, and at +1, the candidate's agendas are perfectly congruent and all other candidates' agendas in that outlet are completely incongruent.

Measuring Perceived Traits and Bias Exposure

Trait perceptions and bias exposure were measured in an online panel survey of a sample of the Austrian population eligible to vote, where respondents were drawn randomly from an opt-in online access panel based on key demographics. The profile of the panel was largely in line with the overall population, with minor discrepancies concerning age and region (Kritzinger et al. 2014). After dropping cases with missing values for relevant variables, the remaining subsamples contained between 911 and 927 respondents, depending on the trait evaluation. While our bias measures consider all five parties, data restrictions in the survey mean that we can only test effects on candidate trait assessments for the leaders of the three major parties, which were Werner Faymann (Social Democrats), Michael Spindelegger (People's Party), and Heinz-Christian Strache (Freedom Party).

Our survey measures perceptions of competence, assertiveness, likability, and honesty. Competence and assertiveness unmistakably belong to the group of political candidate traits as they relate to policy expertise and leadership qualities (e.g., Funk 1996; Tenscher 2013). Our second pair of traits is less clearly related to political performance. Although likability is oriented toward the personal character of a candidate, honesty refers to credibility, morals, and trust (Druckman et al. 2004). Van Aelst et al. (2011) describe the latter as hybrid characteristics that fall into both camps as they can relate to personal as well as political matters.

Respondents were asked to rate each of the candidates on a scale from either 0 to 10 (for likability) or 1 to 4 (for competence, assertiveness, and honesty); the lower the score, the lower the candidate's rating. All traits were rescaled to range from 0 to 1. We also combined all candidate traits into a summary additive index (ranging from 0–1).

We measured each individual's exposure to media bias using their reported media consumption for each media outlet on a scale from 0 to 7, where 0 stands for never reading a specific outlet and 7 stands for reading this outlet every day of the week. We computed voter i's bias exposure toward candidate j based on their use of different media outlets k: $bias_{ij} = \frac{\sum_1^k (use_{ik} \times bias_{jk})}{\sum_1^k use_{ik}}$.

As we have a three-wave survey, our model allows for causal claims concerning how media bias exposure since $t-1$ affects voters' candidate trait perceptions at t. To that end, our model includes a lagged measure of candidate trait evaluations. Media bias exposure measures based on the first three weeks of data are then used to explain changes in trait perceptions from survey wave 1 ($t-1$) to survey wave 2 (t). Similarly, media bias measures from the last three weeks of the election campaign are used to explain changes in trait perceptions from wave 2 ($t-1$) to wave 3 (t). Both these three-week data sets are stacked into one larger data set, providing a more reliable and precise model of media bias effects.

Our stacked data analyses also control for many possible confounders, such as age (in years) and gender (0/1, 1 = male). We also include variables measuring the level of formal education (0–3), political interest (0–3), and the attentiveness to the election campaign (0–3), late deciding (0/1), party identification (0/1), and Left-Right self-placement (0–10),[6] as political sophistication, the time of vote decision, and partisanship have been shown to affect susceptibility to media bias (Fournier et al. 2004; Zaller

1992). To ensure that the bias effects we estimate are based on the actual media content and not just on media exposure in general, we control for political print media use (additive index of days per week spent reading each news outlet, theoretical range of 0–49). Finally, we include measures of political television, radio, and online news exposure, all with a range of 0 to 4. These nonparty-specific variables are transformed to the centered predicted values associated with each candidate in the stacked data (see van der Eijk et al. 2006).[7]

Finally, we include fixed effects for each of the three candidates, which control for candidate-specific structural differences, that is, overall differences in exposure to candidates across all respondents. For instance, some candidates may be more visible than others as they are incumbents.

Including lagged measurements, a large set of control variables as well as these candidate fixed effects in a single model guarantees a very conservative measurement of media bias effects, eliminating many potentially confounding factors. To test the general effects of the different types of media bias, as well as candidate trait specificities (H1a–H1c), we estimated linear regression models for each candidate trait as well as the candidates' overall image index, with standard errors clustered by respondent. Then, we reran these analyses to test the moderating effects of visibility bias by including interaction terms between the different forms of candidate bias (H2a and H2b).

Results

We begin by providing descriptive information regarding candidate trait perceptions. Figure 1 shows that all three candidates left a rather bad impression, regardless of the perceived trait. While for most traits Faymann and Strache increase their scores over the course of the election, Spindelegger's trait perceptions are more stable. Looking more closely at the third-wave measurement (only a few days before the election), Faymann's unique feature is his likability. Strache, while perceived as least honest and least competent, was seen as most assertive. Spindelegger had no unique positive feature, although his lack of assertiveness distinguished him from the other candidates. Concerning differences between the traits, few short-term dynamics can be witnessed regarding the likability trait; this also applies to competence and honesty. The most dynamic trait is assertiveness.[8] In sum, changes are small, with an increase or decrease by a maximum of about 5 percentage points from one wave to the next.

To detect media bias effects, it is a prerequisite that outlets actually differ in their coverage of each party leader. However, our evidence suggests that during the 2013 Austrian election campaign (see Appendix Table A1), visibility bias follows a similar pattern in most media outlets and in both time periods, indicating weak political bias. The chancellor is most visible, followed by the vice-chancellor, and the opposition leader Strache. Conversely, there is strong variation between outlets, election weeks, and candidates in terms of tonality bias. For example, Faymann has a very positive score in the tabloid newspaper *Kronen Zeitung*, whereas the quality newspapers *Der Standard* and *Die Presse* tend to criticize all candidates equally, confirming theories on journalistic norms (McQuail 1992). Moreover, variation between outlets again suggests that

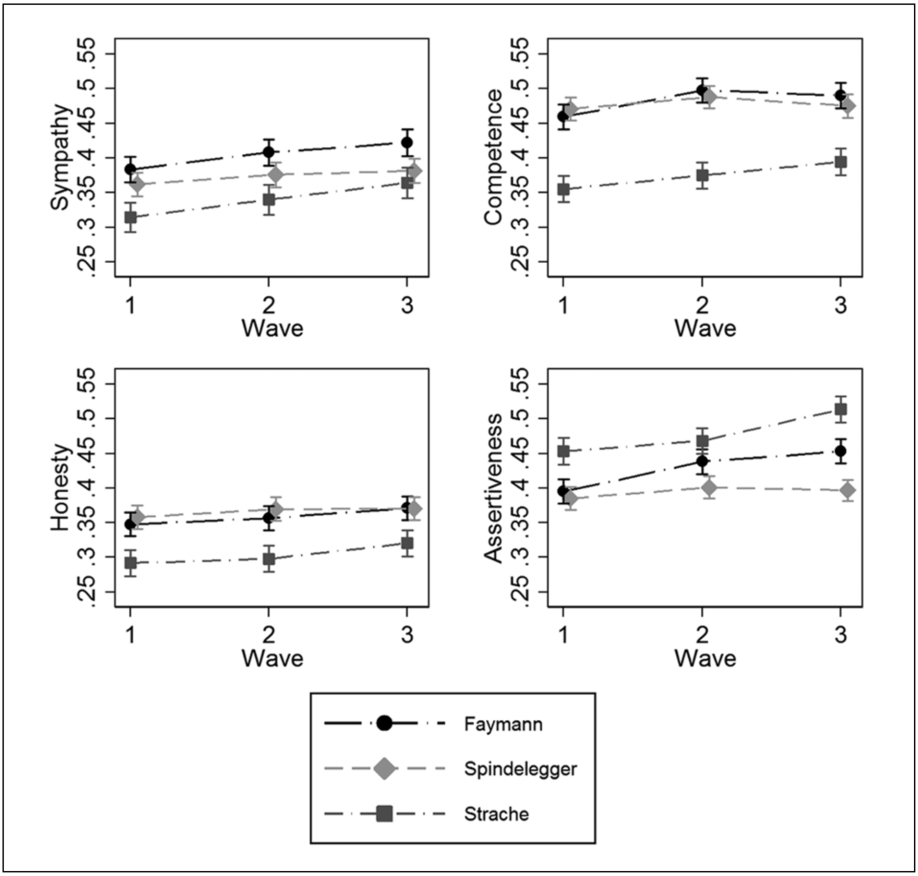

Figure 1. Candidate assessment dynamics.
Note. Figure shows candidate-specific mean character trait scores with 95 percent confidence intervals.

agenda bias is considerable. Providing face validity, the strongest negative agenda bias score is for the right-wing front-runner Strache in the liberal quality newspaper *Der Standard*, while the most positive score is in the conservative quality paper *Die Presse*. Finally, only rarely do all three types of bias point in the same direction for one candidate in one outlet. In many cases, bias scores as well as rank orders between candidates also differ in the first and the last three weeks of the election, supporting our precise three-wave measurement of trait perceptions to properly assess media bias effects.

The main concern now is to what extent media bias may have caused trait perceptions to change and if these effects are stronger for one group of traits than for the other. To answer this question, we turn to the multivariate analysis (Table 1).

Following H1a, we expect a more positive effect of visibility bias on political than on nonpolitical candidate trait perceptions. However, no significant impact of visibility bias on any trait can be confirmed. This is likely due to the fact that visibility is strongly

Table 1. Linear Regression of Media Bias Effects on Candidate Assessments.

Dependent Variable: Post-Trait Measure	Nonpolitical Traits		Political Traits		Summary Index
	Model 1 Likability	Model 2 Honesty	Model 3 Competence	Model 4 Assertiveness	Model 5 Image
Trait measure $t-1$	0.772***	0.623***	0.659***	0.568***	0.795***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.010)
Visibility Bias	0.044	0.019	−0.046	−0.024	−0.021
	(0.050)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.058)	(0.036)
Tonality Bias	−0.022	0.034	0.069**	0.071*	0.039*
	(0.030)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.018)
Agenda Bias	0.030†	0.027	0.052**	0.057*	0.034*
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.024)	(0.013)
Controls included	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	0.096***	0.141***	0.177***	0.239***	0.101***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.006)
R^2	.65	.48	.52	.40	.69
N of observations	5,447	5,398	5,421	5,366	5,261
N of clusters	927	919	923	917	911

Note. Standard errors in parentheses and clustered by respondents.
†$p < .1$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

related to party size and candidate relevance, leaving little substantive variance between outlets. Visibility bias does not seem to be an important factor in determining changes in candidate trait perceptions by itself.

There is stronger evidence for a positive effect of tonality bias on candidate trait assessments. Statistically significant effects are present for the political traits as well as for the overall candidate image. For a standard deviation (=0.13) increase in tonality bias, we expect an increase by about 0.01 points in perceived competence and assertiveness. Tonality bias influences perceived competence and assertiveness, even if this effect is relatively small in the short time period we study.

Similarly, we also find significant effects of agenda bias on political trait assessments and the summary index. For a standard deviation (=0.16) increase in agenda bias, we expect political trait scores to increase again by about 1 percentage point. Respondents therefore tend to evaluate a candidate's competence, assertiveness, and overall image more positively when a candidate has the opportunity to prime his or her favorite issues.

In sum, we only find partial support for H1a to H1c. These first results, however, support our assumption that media bias effects may differ between political and nonpolitical candidate traits (RQ1). While visibility bias effects are never statistically significant, both tonality bias and agenda bias significantly affect political trait perceptions as well as the overall candidate image but not, however, nonpolitical trait perceptions.[9]

Our second set of hypotheses (H2a–b) concerns potential interaction effects with visibility bias. To investigate this relationship, we add interaction effects

Table 2. Linear Regression of Media Bias Effects on Candidate Assessments (Interactions).

Dependent Variable: Post-Trait Measure	Nonpolitical Traits		Political Traits		Summary Index
	Model 1 Likability	Model 2 Honesty	Model 3 Competence	Model 4 Assertiveness	Model 5 Image
Pre-trait measure	0.772***	0.623***	0.659***	0.568***	0.795***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.010)
Visibility Bias	0.045	0.033	−0.054	−0.021	−0.020
	(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.058)	(0.036)
Tonality Bias	−0.025	0.034	0.075**	0.069*	0.038*
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.019)
Agenda Bias	0.030	0.031	0.049**	0.058*	0.035*
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.013)
Visibility × Tonality Bias	−0.160	−0.463	0.545†	−0.197	−0.075
	(0.320)	(0.336)	(0.316)	(0.342)	(0.225)
Visibility × Agenda Bias	0.240	−0.363	−0.123	0.027	0.003
	(0.221)	(0.251)	(0.259)	(0.293)	(0.174)
Controls included	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	0.104***	0.137***	0.146***	0.240***	0.101***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.006)
R^2	.65	.48	.52	.40	.69
N of observations	5,447	5,398	5,421	5,366	5,261
N of clusters	927	919	923	917	911

Note. Standard errors in parentheses and clustered by respondents.
†$p < .1$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

between visibility bias and tonality bias as well as visibility bias and agenda bias.[10] Only competence perceptions show tendencies in support of our hypotheses (see Table 2).

A closer look at this interaction effect between visibility bias and tonality bias on candidate competence perceptions (see Figure 2) confirms the multiplying effects of visibility bias (H2a). The more visible a candidate, the stronger the effect of tonality bias (p = .085). The effect of tonality bias is indistinguishable from 0 when visibility bias is at its lowest value. Visibility bias, thus, may act as a multiplier of negative or positive tonality. For example, a standard deviation increase in tonality bias (=0.13) for very visible candidates will increase the competence score by 0.03 points; this is three times its effect in a model without interaction terms. Similarly, the effect of visibility bias turns negative when tonality bias is negative (see Figure 3). At the most negative tonality bias exposure of −0.37, a standard deviation increase in visibility bias (=0.08) will lead respondents to decrease their competence perceptions by 0.02 points. The pattern is not quite as stark as expected in H2b, but we do see that the direction of the effects of visibility bias on candidate competence perceptions at least somewhat depend on the tonality of media coverage (H2b).

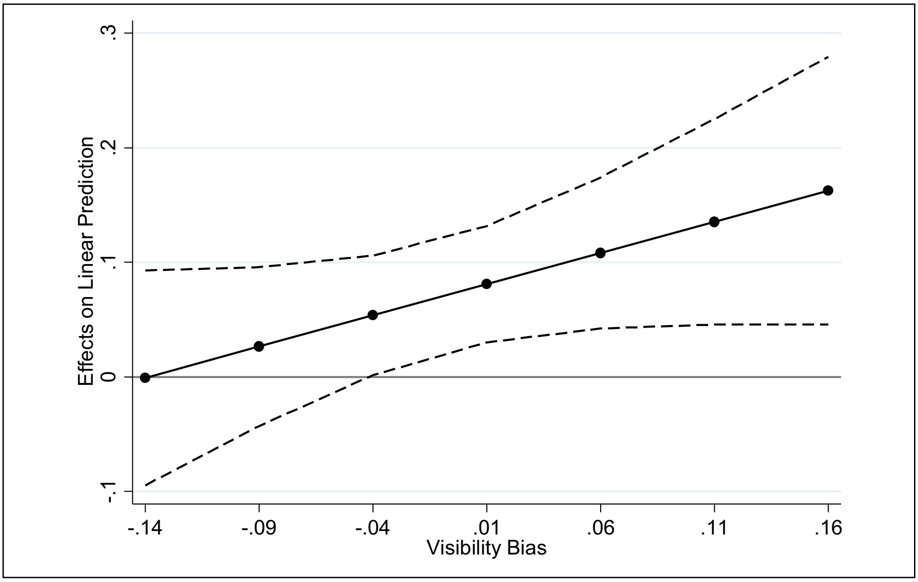

Figure 2. Marginal effects of tonality bias on candidate competence depending on changes in visibility bias with 95 percent confidence interval.
Note. Graph is computed based on Model 3 in Table 2.

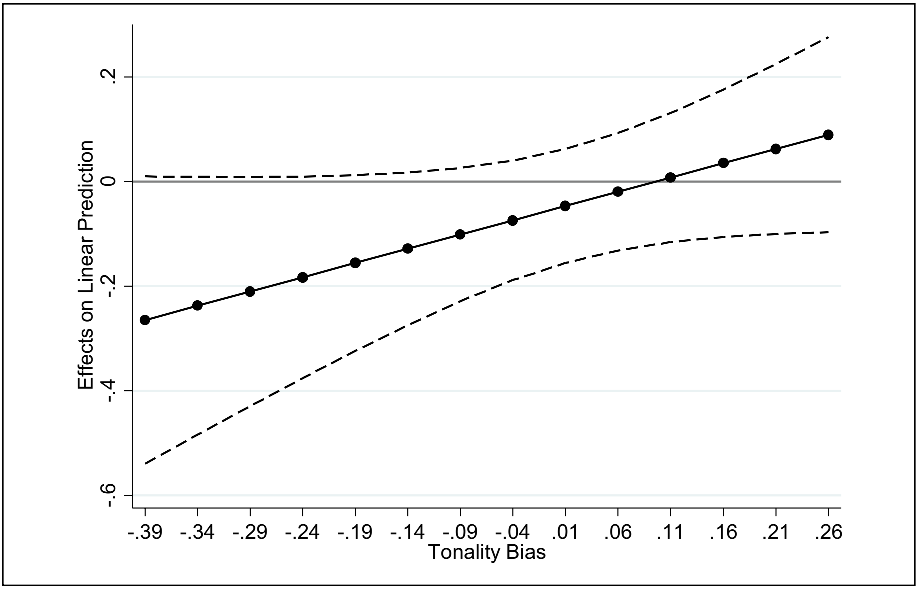

Figure 3. Marginal effects of visibility bias on candidate competence depending on changes in tonality bias with 95 percent confidence interval.
Note. Based on Model 3, Table 2.

Conclusion

Our study has found evidence of media bias effects on candidate trait perceptions, and in particular, on those traits that are more politically relevant (H1a–c). Specifically, voters update their assessments of candidates' competence and assertiveness in response to valenced portrayals of candidates in the media. Voters also perceive candidates' political traits and overall image more favorably if those candidates are able to address their own favored topics relatively more prominently in media coverage, thereby probably priming the specific issues on which they want their political aptitude to be assessed (Druckman et al. 2004). Visibility bias had no direct effects on candidate perceptions, in line with previous studies on the United Kingdom and Germany (Boomgaarden and Semetko 2012; Norris et al. 1999). However, there was evidence that visibility bias moderated the effects of tonality bias concerning competence perceptions (H2a–b). The moderating impact of visibility is in line with attribute agenda-setting theory (Balmas and Sheafer 2010; Kiousis et al. 1999). Moreover, if tonality bias is negative, more visibility somewhat worsens the impact of media coverage for that candidate, which is in line with past studies showing that bad candidate impressions in media coverage will affect voters more than good ones (Wu and Coleman 2014).

The magnitude of the effects of candidate bias in our study can be described as relatively small in terms of explanatory power (Bennett and Iyengar 2008), which is to be expected given several key aspects of our empirical approach. Most important, our model captures two short time frames of three weeks each during which media effects could accumulate. In addition, we estimated a very conservative model by including strong controls for prior influences on candidate perceptions, selective media exposure as well as for candidate-specific differences. Hence, finding any media effects on changes in candidate trait perceptions at all in the two very short time frames during one election is important given the design of the study. While we cannot speak to notions of reinforcement versus conversion effects in this study (Holbert et al. 2010), future research should consider whether effects of different forms of bias have more diverse effects for different subgroups of the electorate. Moreover, future research should also extend the work in this study by examining downstream effects of media bias on vote choice based on changes in candidate perceptions (e.g., Takens et al. 2015); finding such an influence would underline the importance and impact of media bias in candidate coverage.

Our study focused on applying a careful and thorough research design regarding one election in one country, naturally raising the question of the comparative applicability of the present findings. We believe that some of our findings are likely to apply across a variety of contexts. For example, our theoretical claims concerning the greater effects on political traits and the moderating impact of visibility bias are not specific to the Austrian case. Hence, we would expect similar patterns to hold elsewhere, irrespective of the specific media system and media-citizen relationship in each country. However, testing this claim is up to future research.

Other aspects of our findings are likely to be more dependent on the electoral and institutional context. For example, voter familiarity with candidates varies greatly by electoral context. We found no direct effect of visibility bias, but this may be partly due to the fact that candidates in our study were quite well known to the public already. Visibility may play a more important role in situations where political actors need to establish themselves in the public arena (e.g., Vliegenthart et al. 2012). In addition, the size of the effects of media bias may vary depending on the institutional context: For instance, candidate-specific media bias effects may be greater in more candidate-centered systems, such as Ireland or the United States (e.g., Lawson et al. 2010).

The media context will also affect the portability of our findings. For one, our study focused on printed newspapers. However, it is likely that effects differ between types of media, as television news and more visual information may more strongly affect traits that are based on heuristic information processing (see Boomgaarden et al. 2016). Moreover, different media systems are characterized by different levels of political parallelism, polarization, and consumer trust. Austria is rather typical of other European multiparty contexts, increasing the likely comparative applicability of our study. Nevertheless, research on motivated reasoning leads us to expect media bias effects to be greater if polarization is higher, media trust is greater, and parallelism is more pronounced (e.g., Levendusky 2013, J.M. Miller and Krosnick 2000, van Kempen 2007).

Our findings suggest three important aspects future studies need to consider in assessing the media influences on perceptions of candidates and probably political objects more generally: (1) there are different types of bias, which (2) have stronger effects on political than nonpolitical traits, and (3) interact with each other. Hence, future research should try to include as many different types of bias as possible. For instance, agenda bias, which is rarely considered, had relatively clear effects in our study. At the very least, researchers need to be aware of and acknowledge the fact that different types of bias can have different effects. In particular, the lack of direct effects of visibility bias implies that researchers should expect greater direct impact from tonality and agenda bias. Second, future studies should conceive of candidate traits as multidimensional. Our study suggests that it is likely that media coverage influences political dimensions more than nonpolitical traits. Finally, future research should check for interactions between types of media bias, particularly concerning visibility bias.

To conclude, this study also has three practical implications for campaigning politicians and parties.

1. Well-known candidates should be more concerned about the type of coverage they receive than about the amount of coverage. Our focus on tonality contrasts with prior studies, which tend to attach a lot of weight to assessments of visibility of actors in the public realm (e.g., Oegema and Kleinnijenhuis 2000).
2. Parties should tailor their increasingly personalized campaigns more strongly to competence and leadership qualities as this is where effects of news coverage are more likely to occur (Druckman et al. 2004).
3. Campaigns should avoid de-emphasizing policy goals and ideology completely as agenda bias matters for candidate perceptions. Overall, researchers and practitioners would benefit from acknowledging the complexity of trait perceptions, media bias, and their interplay.

Appendix

Table A1. Candidate Bias Descriptive Statistics (First Three Weeks/Last Three Weeks).

	Newspapers					
	Der Standard	*Die Presse*	*Kronen Zeitung*	*Kurier*	*Österreich*	*Kleine Zeitung*
Visibility Bias						
Candidates						
Faymann	0.09/0.13	0.13/0.10	0.13/0.20	0.10/0.11	0.06/0.17	0.13/0.09
Spindelegger	0.01/0.02	0.07/0.19	0.04/0.03	0.09/−0.03	0.11/0.04	0.12/0.01
Strache	−0.06/−0.06	−0.10/−0.07	−0.09/−0.14	−0.10/−0.03	−0.06/−0.01	−0.10/−0.03
Tonality Bias						
Candidates						
Faymann	−0.06/0.10	0.06/0.04	0.20/0	0.04/0.04	0.21/0.14	0.30/−0.14
Spindelegger	−0.05/0.03	−0.13/0.08	−0.02/−0.28	0.01/−0.05	−0.14/−0.06	0.03/0.04
Strache	−0.05/0.03	0/0.05	−0.37/0.08	−0.18/0.12	0.02/−0.02	−0.22/−0.16
Agenda Bias						
Candidates						
Faymann	0.39/−0.05	−0.37/0.01	0.18/0.14	0.37/−0.24	0.21/0.04	−0.04/0.04
Spindelegger	−0.54/0.28	0.18/−0.08	0.04/−0.04	−0.01/−0.25	−0.16/−0.17	−0.21/−0.40
Strache	−0.51/−0.64	−0.33/0.48	0.11/−0.03	−0.23/−0.26	0.16/−0.24	−0.32/0.38

Note. The table shows bias measures from the first and last three weeks of the campaign, which are separated by a forward slash (/).

Table A2. Linear Regression of Media Bias Effects on Candidate Assessments (Stacked Traits Model).

Dependent Variable: Post-Trait Measure	Model 1	Model 2
Trait measure $t-1$	0.622***	0.622***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Visibility Bias	−0.015	0.063
	(0.042)	(0.048)
Tonality Bias	0.059**	0.022
	(0.018)	(0.025)
Agenda Bias	0.047**	0.021
	(0.014)	(0.019)
Political Trait (0/1)	0.043***	0.048***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Visibility Bias × Political Trait	—	-0.116**
		(0.036)
Tonality Bias × Political Trait	—	0.055*
		(0.026)

(continued)

Table A2. (continued)

Dependent Variable: Post-Trait Measure	Model 1	Model 2
Agenda Bias × Political Trait	—	0.040†
		(0.021)
Controls included	YES	YES
Constant	0.142***	0.137***
	(0.006)	(0.006)
R^2	.48	.48
N of observations	16,185	16,185
N of clusters	925	925

Note. Standard errors in parentheses and clustered by respondents.
†$p < .1$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

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Notes

1. Political bias is different from structural patterns in coverage, which exist if coverage is similar for all candidates within one media outlet or similar for one candidate across all outlets (van Dalen 2012). An example of structural patterns within a medium would be an outlet that tends to criticize all candidates equally. Examples of structural patterns across outlets include incumbency and size bonuses (e.g., Brandenburg 2005; Semetko and Boomgaarden 2007). However, such patterns are not ideologically driven and not necessarily normatively problematic but rather reflect media routines and the balance of power in the political system (Hopmann et al. 2011; van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg 2001).
2. It was not possible to include coverage by Austrian television news. Although this content was analyzed, there were not enough news stories that included the front-runners to allow meaningful comparisons to the newspaper content.
3. Intercoder reliability scores (Krippendorff's α) are based on a subset of claims ($N = 1,123$) coded by seven coders. The scores for the identification of speakers, addressees, evaluative statements, and issues were .85, .78, .76, and .80, respectively.
4. Agreement across six coders was based on a subset of press releases and arrived at values of .99 and .70 (Krippendorff's α) for the identification of speakers and issues ($N = 100$).

5. These issues are economy, budget and taxes, employment, social welfare, agriculture, education, law and order, infrastructure, environment, individual rights and societal values, European integration, foreign affairs and defense, immigration, political misconduct and corruption, and government reforms.
6. We enter Left-Right self-placement as a series of binary indicator variables so that those answering *don't know* or refusing a response are not dropped from the analysis.
7. This procedure was done separately for the two three-week data sets from waves 1/2 and waves 2/3.
8. Correlations between pre- and post-measurements are at .77 for likability, .67 for honesty, .71 for competence, and .61 for assertiveness.
9. Similar results were found by stacking the data set once more and interacting visibility bias, tonality bias, and agenda bias each with a dummy specifying the trait type (interactions are significant at $p = .001$, $p = .034$, and $p = .058$, respectively). See Appendix Table A2 for details.
10. Although not specifically hypothesized, the interaction between visibility bias and agenda bias was added to show a more complete picture of effects.

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Book Reviews

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Helen Margetts, Peter John, Scott Hale, and Taha Yasseri
Political Turbulence: How Social Media Shape Collective Action. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. 279 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-15922-5

Reviewed by: Bruce Bimber, *University of California, Santa Barbara, CA, USA*
DOI: 10.1177/1940161216675457

Margetts, John, Hale, and Yasseri have written one of the best books yet about politics in the context of digital media. They address important terrain: the intersection of individual-level attributes with macro-level theories of collective action and the large-scale structure of democracy. Undoubtedly, scholars interested specifically in social media and politics should make a priority of reading *Political Turbulence*. For social scientists more generally this is a worthwhile and sophisticated book of wide theoretical compass that integrates personality and behavior, social influence, conditional cooperation, group size effects, behavioral thresholds, punctuated equilibrium, and political pluralism.

The thesis of *Political Turbulence* is that social media have injected greater instability and unpredictability into political life. The multi-layered argument for how this is happening goes as follows. In the social media context, many new opportunities exist for mobilization, especially at the low-cost end of the participation ladder. The reason is that the dense linkages among citizens facilitated by social media reduce transactions costs and the need for formal leadership and organization. And, most importantly, these linkages set up non-linear chain reactions due to feedback and the non-independence of preferences.

These systems features mean that mobilizations online do not build steadily, accumulating participants in a classic S-curve of diffusion. Instead, they grow very rapidly, or they dissipate. Most fail—more so than in the case of traditional mobilization. And the few that succeed do not necessarily differ in any important way from the great many that do not. This means that mobilization through social media is subject to punctuated equilibria. The distribution of mass mobilization outcomes across size is leptokurtic. This is "political turbulence," and it contributes to what the authors call "chaotic pluralism," a theoretical extension well beyond what I labeled *post-bureaucratic pluralism* myself years ago.

Political Turbulence continues onward theoretically, connecting this argument into individual-level theories. The authors argue that decisions to participate in politics made in this context are shaped by susceptibility to social influence. A crucial point is that not all people respond equally to social influence, and they vary as well in their willingness to join an action early on rather than after it has gained momentum and viability. What explains this variation is not attributes classically considered in most behavioral models, but psychological attributes: social value orientation and personality traits, especially extraversion, agreeableness, and locus of control.

In this way, *Political Turbulence* proposes an ambitious explanatory line extending from individual-level psychological attributes through behavioral tendencies to systems-level patterns of political mobilization and expression of interests. Evidence in support of this argument comes from large data sets of petition-signing behavior in the United States and United Kingdom, a field experiment manipulating social information at a real petition site, and a traditional public goods experiment. *Political Turbulence* is vulnerable to the critique that too much theory is tested by data confined to just petitioning behavior and cooperation in a public goods game. A book of this theoretical range is bound to outrun evidence, and of course it would be desirable to test the propositions more widely, as the authors acknowledge. But the empirical work is careful, and it more than does the job of establishing the promise of the theory and approach, especially because the findings are consonant with other work on network dynamics and social influence in politics.

Political Turbulence makes me want to know more about several things. First, the study of social influence in psychology has produced a thicket of causal pathways applying to disparate social configurations. *Political Turbulence* elegantly cuts through this thicket by focusing on just two: social information about the number of other people participating in an action and the visibility of a person's own action to others. The assumption of instrumentality is never far in the background; the authors argue that social information matters because it helps people make more efficient decisions. Yet, many non-instrumental forms of social influence exist. These are likely pervasive in politics and at least as important as the informational cues associated with social signals. The price of conceptual elegance in this regard is short shrift given to the larger, messy world of social influence. An expanded exploration of social influence mechanisms would not likely undermine the big claims about turbulence here, but expand them.

Second, the book focuses on the phenomenon of micro-actions involving tiny donations of time or money. These are low in cost and often feature the strong feedback linkages among citizens that promote non-linear dynamics. Extending the theory up the ladder of participation is important, as the authors point out in the final chapter. A broader approach to social influence may help accomplish that so that this becomes fully a theory of political turbulence throughout the political system, not only in the domain of petitions and other micro-actions.

Doing that would require confronting the fact that interest groups and social movement organizations are still in the mix of pluralism. The signals reaching citizens through social media are not only about the behavior of others but also comprise messages from organizations, candidates, and news media, and often constitute hybrid mash-ups of messages that have flowed through citizen networks, organizations, and news businesses. This does not undermine the assertion that social influence mechanisms are more important now than two decades ago, but it makes the story more complex. Reading *Political Turbulence* makes me want to know more about how chaotic pluralism works in this broader setting. The insights of this ambitious and successful book set the stage for more work that connects individual-level attributes to macro-dynamics of contemporary political behavior.

Christopher Bail
Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. 212 pp. ISBN: 978-0-691-15942-3.

Reviewed by: Bill Gamson, *Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, USA*
DOI: 10.1177/1940161216675459

Although this book was written a couple of years ago and published in 2015, the U.S. presidential candidacy of Donald Trump made it especially relevant for the 2016 U.S. election season. Without setting out to do so, Bail helps us to understand the appeal of Trump's anti-Muslim themes and his anti-immigration and deportation themes more generally. In 2015, most U.S. political pundits were making the case that Trump's gaining the Republican nomination for the presidency was highly improbable if not impossible. Bail helps us to understand why they were wrong.

The central story in the book is about the framing contest over the meaning and understanding of Islam. Bail makes a convincing case that there was nothing inevitable about the success of anti-Muslim organizations in the wake of 9/11. The attack was widely condemned by a broad spectrum of Muslim organizations. In the initial years after the attack, public opinion of Muslims actually became more favorable.

Anti-Muslim organizations were able to use the mainstream media and to exploit their biases to make effective use of this favorable opportunity structure. Through their collective action, they were able to create cultural change. Initially, actions such as the "burning of the Qur'an" campaign were widely condemned and would seem to have been counter-productive. Far from resonating with dominant cultural themes, they appeared to contradict them. Bail fails to really grasp the resonance argument and fails to evaluate the resonance with important counter themes—a connection that became more and more important in the ensuing years.

Although Bail does not use the term, he emphasizes the important contribution of "hot cognitions," that is, belief systems that incorporate strong emotional appeals that attract the attention of journalists—especially fear and anger. The pro-Muslim organizations were much weaker in such appeals than the anti-organizations and, accordingly, received much less media attention. He suggests that the success of Muslim organizations in being "well-integrated within the social, cultural, and political fabric of American life by the turn of the 21st century" (p. 28) actually turned out to be a handicap in gaining media attention.

One of the most impressive achievements of the book is the wide array of data used in the analysis. This includes not only a "Big Data" analysis of 300,000 press releases, articles, and other documents but also interviews with organizational leaders and an extensive analysis of social media such as Twitter and Facebook. While the findings are sometimes what we would expect, there are also plenty of surprises and non-obvious results. This book is not only an important and useful contribution to understanding the framing contest over the nature and meaning of Islam but also a more general model of how collective action can create cultural change.

Gunn Enli
Mediated Authenticity: How the Media Constructs Reality. New York: Peter Lang, 2015. 164 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-4331-1485-4 (Paperback).

Reviewed by: Winfried Schulz, *Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Nürnberg, Germany*
DOI: 10.1177/1940161216675458

How the media constructs reality is an archetypical theme of communication theory and research. Usually, the focus is on news reporting and the media's "surveillance of the environment." Even decades before Harold Lasswell (1948) listed this as one key function of communication in society, Walter Lippmann pointed to the difference between news and truth (1922, p. 358). Since then, a great number of scholars have contributed to conceptually and empirically illuminating what Gunn Enli calls a paradox: "Although we base most of our knowledge about our society and the world in which we live on mediated representations of reality, we remain well aware that the media are constructed, manipulated, and even faked" (p. 1). She proposes a novel perspective on this paradox. More than in the accuracy of news reporting, Enli is interested in the power of the media to construct images of media personas. The introductory chapter of her book though deals briefly with news studies discussing trustworthiness as one of three defining aspects of the concept of mediated authenticity. The other two defining aspects, originality and spontaneity, are looked at in the contexts of tourism studies and music studies, respectively. Enli refers to prominent witnesses, such as Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Jean Baudrillard, who have been criticizing "the mass media as presenting a phony version of reality" (p. 8).

The major part of Enli's essay is devoted to lively narrations of five key episodes in the media's historic development, from the early days of radio unto present days' digital media. The initial event is the legendary "War of the Worlds" radio play by Orson Welles, which Enli calls "the most infamous authenticity scandal in the history of broadcast media" (p. 19). This is the only case study dealing with a specific media event and its aftermath, whereas all the others are focusing on certain protagonists and their media performances: Roosevelt and his radio "fireside chats" during the "golden age" of radio; Charles Van Doren, the fraudulent quiz show champion of the prospering American TV industry in the late 1950s; Susan Boyle, the surprising "ordinary" star of the show "Britain's Got Talent" that boosted the success of the reality TV genre in the 1990s; three fake bloggers—Kaycee Nicole, lonelygirl15, and "A Gay Girl in Damascus"—demonstrating how Internet hoaxes create authenticity illusions; and finally Barack Obama, "The first US presidential candidate on Facebook" (p. 120), who projected himself as an icon of hipness and credibility. The different episodes illustrate Enli's basic argument that the reality of mediated communication is based on illusions of authenticity due to a tacit agreement—an "authenticity contract"—between media producers and audiences. When the contract is challenged or broken, an "authenticity puzzle" or even an "authenticity scandal" is the result. Each episode presented in the book relates to spectacular aspects of an emerging new media technology or media format "which imposes a renegotiation of the authenticity contract" (p. 19). Gunn Enli, a professor of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo (Norway), justifies the Anglo-American focus of her choice of the key episodes by saying that media technologies have traditionally been implemented early in these regions (p. 21).

The concluding chapter, in picking up again the discussion of conceptual aspects of the book's introduction, ends with a "tentative theory." Readers may take the qualifying term "tentative" as a warning not to expect a theoretical construct that should be submitted to falsification. In fact, as an extract of her case studies, Enli suggests a set of seven criteria "for identifying how mediated authenticity is created" (p. 137). These criteria—predictability, spontaneity, immediacy, confessions, ordinariness, ambivalence, and imperfection—may well serve as starting points for systematic empirical follow-ups investigating the substance and the main stakeholders of the authenticity contract. Gunn Enli provides an inspiring conceptual base for further research not only on how the media construct authenticity illusions but also on how audiences react to authenticity scandals and puzzles. Indeed, there are more puzzling questions to be answered: Why do audiences demand authenticity? Why does mediated authenticity turn ordinary people into celebrities? And if it is true that authenticity, as Enli argues, "is a dominant tendency of contemporary culture" (p. 2), what are the empirical indications of such a tendency?

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